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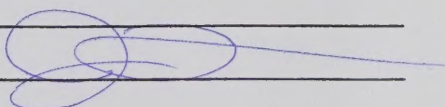
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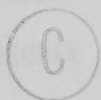


THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

TRAPLINES AND TIMBER: SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGE  
AMONG THE CARRIER INDIANS OF NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

by

DOUGLAS R. HUDSON



A THESIS

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis presents a study of the effects of commercial, state, and industrial activities on the Carrier Indians of northern British Columbia, Canada, and the ways in which the Carriers have adapted to, or coped with, these activities in order to maintain a bush economy (hunting, trapping, and fishing) and social institutions which ensure the distribution of resources between Carrier households. This study identifies material changes which have led to changes in the ownership and use of bush resources, and the structure and function of institutions in contemporary Carrier society.

The study argues that over almost two centuries, bush resources (fish, ungulates, small game) have provided the material basis of Carrier society. In the nineteenth and twentieth century, trapping, wage labour, and state social service programs have been used by the Carriers to maintain their bush economy. In contrast to other approaches described in the literature for similar groups, commodity production and wage labour have not led to the dissolution of traditional Carrier economic pursuits. However, the types of resources and technologies used to obtain them have changed, and these material changes have led to changes in social organization. The study identifies the collapse of the salmon fishing component of the bush economy around 1900 as a key factor in culture change. A nineteenth century mode of production in which headmen of matrilineal clans controlled resources with one based on the control of trapping territories by patrilocal groups.

The study, drawing on archival and published sources, plus fieldwork, examines a number of approaches that have been used in anthropology to describe the impact on indigenous people due to their incorporation into mercantile and industrial capitalism. Rejecting acculturation and class analysis, this study presents the notion of articulation of modes of production as a useful approach for interpreting Carrier issues.

Over the period 1806 to 1977, the study shows that Carrier land, labour, and resources were defined in different ways by outside forces. The thesis describes how, as the region became incorporated as a resource hinterland for the fur trade and, later, timber production, the Carriers moved from an integral position as producers of furs and consumers of commodities to marginal suppliers of timber







and labour to the forest industry. In the last stage of industrial penetration of the region, dominated by the demands of pulp and paper production, the marginal position of the Carriers led to an increased dependence on the bush economy and an important redistributive function for clans, potlatches, and a kinship network. Income from state social service programs provided an alternative to wage labour as a means of obtaining funds necessary to maintain the necessary means of bush production. As the technological material base changed, a patrilocal trapping group structure emerged, with an increased importance on defining rights to resources through patrilineal ties. These factors provide a basis for understanding the contemporary Carrier bush mode of production, which is described as a combination of forces and relations of production articulated in a social formation dominated by industrial capitalism, and the emergence of new relations of production.

A case study of one Carrier village, drawing on ethnohistorical and ethnographic perspectives, reiterates the salient aspects of the role of Indian labour, land, and resources during the fur trade, in small scale logging operations, and in a forest industry dominated by large corporations.

The study concludes that there exists a Carrier bush mode of production articulated in a social formation dominated by industrial and state capitalism, and that earlier conclusions about the extent of Carrier acculturation failed to consider the continued importance of bush resources and social institutions which integrated the Carrier community.





## Preface

This study is about the Carrier Indians of Stuart Lake in north-central British Columbia. I lived with the Tl'azt'enne, or Carrier people at the head of Stuart lake, for twelve months over a period from 1975 to 1977, and the ethnographic descriptions contained in this study are based on that stay. As much as possible, I tried to live in a variety of locations - in the larger villages, small hunting and fishing camps, and traplines. I accompanied people on moose hunting expeditions, fishing trips, trapping, and into town to purchase groceries. I observed ceremonies, such as potlatches, and tried to obtain a sense of the social institutions which tied the Tl'azt'enne together in a network of exchange through which bush food and industrial goods flowed.

Because of an interest in the history of relations between the Tl'azt'enne and Euro-Canadians, research was also carried out in the Hudson's Bay Company Archives in Winnipeg, and the British Columbia Provincial Archives in Victoria. Data from these archival sources were discussed with Tl'azt'enne elders, and the archival documentation of the late nineteenth century gradually merged with the oral accounts of the early 1900s, the life histories of elders, and my own ethnographic observations.

To trace out the extent of trapping territories, trapline files in the British Columbia Fish and Wildlife Branch office in Prince George





were consulted. The delineation of traditional Tl'azt'enne territory is based on a detailed analysis of trapline transfers, which were tied into genealogical reconstructions.

My initial contact with the Tl'azt'enne dates to a brief visit in 1974; my latest meeting with them was in 1982, when I gave a workshop to several elders on techniques of teaching culture in the public school.





## Orthography

The writing system used in this study combines symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet (I.P.A.) with Anglicized renderings of Carrier terms, where the latter have been accepted for regular use in the central interior of British Columbia. In some cases, both writing systems are given. For example, the Carrier people upon whom this study focuses refer to themselves as Tl'azt'enne, or "people at the head of the lake" (ʔæzt'ene, plural), or Tl'azt'en (ʔæzt'en, singular). For an inventory of Central Carrier phonemes, see Walker (1979).





## Acknowledgements

The research for this study was made possible with assistance from a number of sources. Ethnographic research was funded by the following institutions: Boreal Institute for Northern Studies, University of Alberta; Department of Anthropology, University of Alberta; Urgent Ethnology Program, National Museum of Man, National Museums of Canada; and the Stuart-Trembleur Lake Band, or Tl'azt'enne. Additional research at the Hudson's Bay Company Archives in Winnipeg, Manitoba, was funded by the Boreal Institute for Northern Studies and a grant from the Phillips Fund of the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia. The Hudson's Bay Company, through archivist Shirlee Smith, allowed me to examine the material for the Stuart Lake region, and I am grateful for their permission to quote from the Fort St. James Journal.

Further financial assistance during the research and studies at the University of Alberta was provided by the Department of Anthropology, University of Alberta, and the Faculty of Graduate Studies at the same university.

Members of my dissertation committee have provided valuable insights into anthropological issues as the study slowly took shape and while their views may not correspond exactly to mine have prodded me into getting my thoughts on paper. These committee members are Michael Asch (dissertation supervisor), Hank Lewis, Tony Fisher, and Rod Wilson.





Several other people have aided me in this endeavour, and I acknowledge their help: Edward John of the Stuart-Trembleur Lake Band; Robert Guay of the Fish and Wildlife office in Prince George, B.C.; Max Innis, a fellow graduate student and sociologist; and Sharon Winter, who helped type this draft.

Most of all, I owe a special debt to the Tl'azt'enne who included me in what I describe in the following pages as their "bush mode of production," took me into their houses, invited me to their potlatches, and let me come and go as I wished. I hope that this work aids them in their endeavours.



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## Chapter 1 Introduction

### The Research Problem

This thesis describes the importance of hunting, trapping, and fishing in a contemporary Carrier Indian band in north-central British Columbia, the social framework within which production and exchange take place, and the historical transformation of certain economic activities and social institutions. This thesis argues that material changes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century led to the demise of a matrilineal clan system, controlled by deneza, or head men, and the emergence of patrilocal groups controlling trapping territories. The contemporary situation of the Carrier Indians is presented as the outcome of specific historical factors, and their dependence on both bush resources and income-producing activities as an outcome of the ways in which capitalist operations over two centuries have used their land, labour, and resources.

This work suggests that the bush economy, as hunting, trapping, and fishing activities are called, has become increasingly important to the Carriers in recent years due to their marginal position to the presently dominant industrial operations of the forest industry. What at first glance appears to be an archaic economy and society coexisting with modern industrial operations is revealed to be a necessary adaptation by the Carriers to their marginal position with respect to capitalism. Rather than dissolving Carrier economic activities and social institutions, capitalism has strengthened the bush economy and its attendant ties of reciprocity. To fully understand the process,





this study examines the specific ways in which the Carriers were incorporated into the needs of capitalism over the period 1806-1977, and the various ways in which Carrier economic activities and social institutions were affected.

As the resource base shifted from a primary dependence on salmon, using weirs, to a mixed hunting and trapping strategy, coupled with seasonal wage labour, traditional forms of resource ownership became attenuated. The power of matrilineal clan leaders, or deneza, who once controlled key fishing sites, diminished as the material basis of the Carrier economy shifted. A pattern of patrilocal residence groups controlling trapping areas emerged, particularly after the turn of the past century. The specific reasons for these changes are discussed in detail in this work.

The specific mechanisms accounting for the transformation are sometimes not readily apparent. However, as I hope to make clear in this thesis, the Carriers started the nineteenth century with the control of the primary means of subsistence production - fish weirs - in the hands of the clan leaders, and left it with patrilocal trapping groups controlling trapping territories. Identifiable changes in the resource base and technology reduced the power of the traditional social system, and a new organizational form emerged. Yet the old structure remained to function as a means of integrating the members of several villages in an exchange and sharing system. In this study, I have sought the material causes of the changes by looking at the articulation of modes of production. I have also sought to explain the continuation of traditional structures in terms of certain functions which they perform in the contemporary mode of production.



The data is presented in terms of the articulation of modes of production, a concept more fully explained later in this chapter. Using this approach, I have examined the impact of capitalist penetration into traditional Carrier territory, and resultant changes in resources, technology, and social relations and institutions in Carrier society. The structure and function of several Carrier social institutions have changed, yet fulfill an important role today in maintaining the economic and social system of the Carriers within the larger Canadian society. Such institutions include matrilineal descent groups, potlatching, and a social hierarchy in which clan headmen once controlled access to resources found within a clan's domain. Using the concept of modes of production, changes are described at two levels: forces of production, and relations of production. The utility of such an approach is described below.

This thesis demonstrates that a framework which draws upon traditional cultural elements has an important role to play in the production and distribution of bush resources. Rather than disappearing, traditional social institutions and activities serve today to reproduce a system of reciprocal obligations within the Carrier communities.

However, this thesis also demonstrates that the articulation, or integration, of the Carriers into the larger national economy and state, set in motion specific material and social changes. An historical perspective is maintained throughout this study, and different impacts of various stages of capitalist involvement with the Carriers are described in order to understand this transformation.





Mercantile capitalism arrived first, in the form of trading companies in search of furs and a market for their commodities. While the Carriers produced furs for foreign markets, their dependence on imported commodities was minimal for most of the nineteenth century. The region was opened up for industrial operations after the completion of a railway in 1914, and a growing number of Carriers found seasonal employment in an expanding sawmill industry. The bush economy remained an important part of the Carrier culture, but wage labour became an essential part of a necessary mixed economy. Technological changes in the forest industry, most importantly the merger of small logging operations into the operations of pulp and paper companies, led to the displacement of seasonal Carrier labour by the late 1960s. Many of the Carriers, now marginal to industrial capitalism, began to depend more on the bush economy. Cash incomes from state social programs provided incomes outside of wage labour which could be used to support the bush economy. This study was carried out with members of a community whose work histories showed both the continuing importance of the bush economy, and the changing relationship of Carrier labour to the forest industry.

### Methodology

Fieldwork was carried out over the period 1975-1977, with about one year total actually spent as a resident with a variety of Carrier Indian camps and villages. Research was centred on the Carriers of Stuart Lake in central British Columbia. By accompanying groups to fish camps, hunting expeditions, potlatches, and through observations and discussions, a picture of the social framework of resource use emerged for the region. Using genealogies, a history of resource use



was sketched out for the region. Archival and other historical sources extended the picture of social groups and resource use back to the early 1800s. Through archival records and life histories, the relationship between hunting, trapping, fishing, and wage labour emerged.

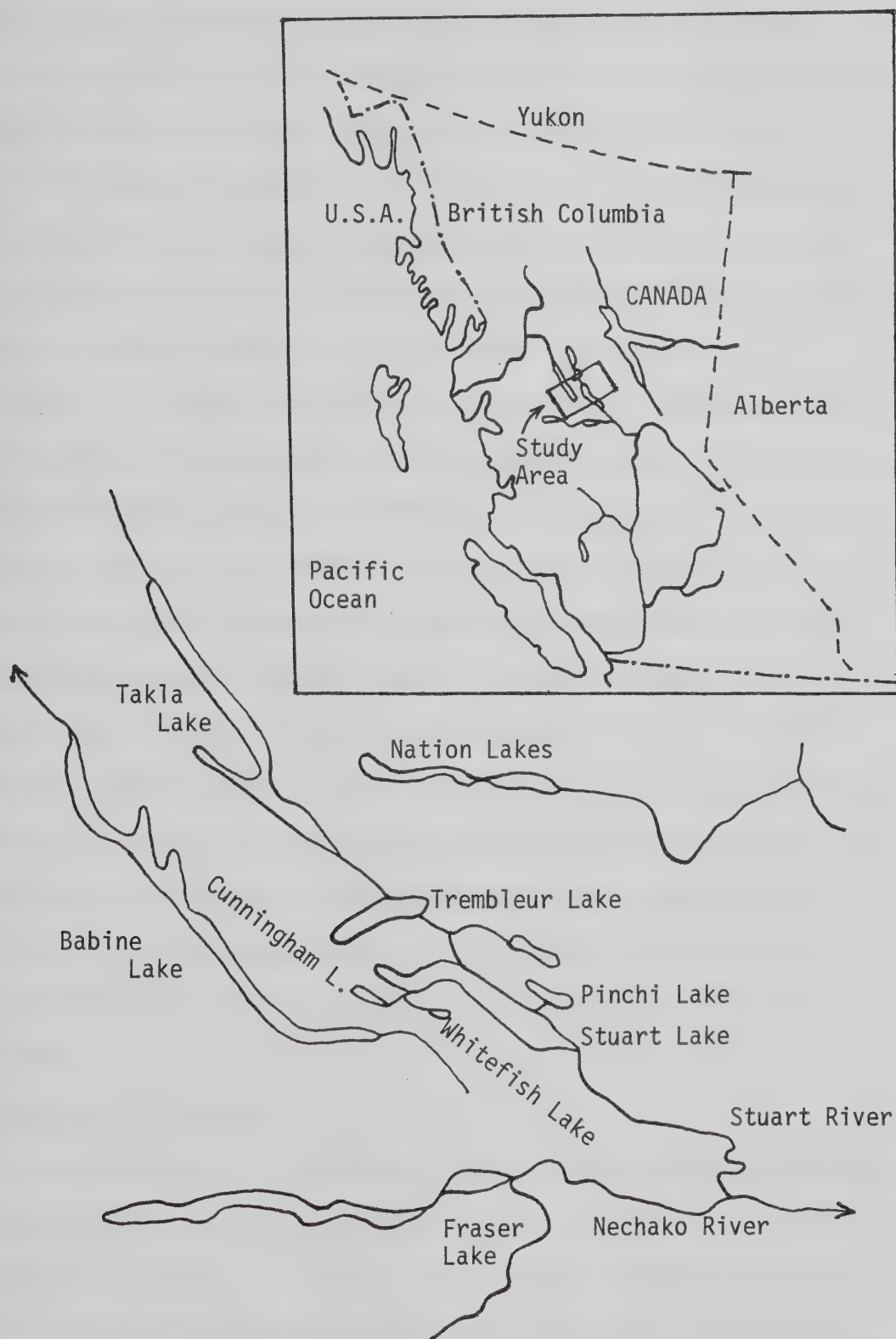
Reliance on actual fieldwork would have produced a narrow perspective on the social and economic history of the Carriers, and much of the research was directed towards presenting elder Carrier respondents with specific historical information for comments. For example, one of the villages was at the crossroads of the fur trade prior to 1900, and past its lodges passed the products of Europe and Canada. Yet when the fieldwork was carried out in the 1970s, the same village appeared isolated. Indeed, access was only possible by aircraft or boat. The seeming isolation of this village was in fact the outcome of a shift in capitalist uses of the region. Once important to the fur trade, the village became irrelevant to industrial capitalism. But its present physical isolation belied its integration into the Canadian state. Transfer payments (Old Age Pension, Family Allowance) provided a means to ensure the perpetuation of the bush economy.

Previous ethnographic accounts, especially those of Julian Steward, emphasized the dissolution of traditional activities and the acculturation of the Carriers into the larger society. The details of the historical record became important in testing those accounts and understanding the functions today of non-capitalist social institutions. My problems with previous accounts are taken up later in the next chapter.





Figure 1 North-Central British Columbia (Nechako Plateau)





Because of the importance of trapping, the records of the Fish and Wildlife Branch were examined and used in conjunction with oral history to map out trapping territories and trace the actual transfers of traplines over several decades. To the Carriers, the traplines provided a concrete statement or representation of traditional territory. Traplines also provided an important starting point for discussions of social history, as rights to resources are defined through particular ties to ancestors, creating patrilocal groups.

Finally, it became clear during the course of research that the region had been incorporated into the economic and social institutions and activities of a number of different populations, all of which viewed the utility of the area's resources in different ways. The Carriers had created a network of exchange to ensure that all member villages had access to the key resource, sockeye salmon. The fur traders saw the region in terms of fur production, and established their own exchange system to obtain their staple. The loggers defined the region in terms of timber, and the region's forests became part of the holdings of industrial corporations. Each new population has its own history, but the emphasis here is on the original group, and how its descendants continue to use the region's resources for their livelihood.

### The Theoretical Framework

The Carrier Indians of northern British Columbia, Canada, have had an important, if somewhat neglected, position in the development of anthropological theory. Cited by Julian Steward (1955) as an example where his cultural ecological approach was inapplicable due to the influence of historical factors, the Carriers have been presented as





an acculturated hunting and trapping population, overwhelmed by the ideological and material inputs of capitalism. While acculturation theory itself has waned in influence in recent years, the impact of Murphy and Steward's (1956) article on subarctic Indian acculturation and various papers by Steward on the Carriers remains important. To the reader of these articles, Carrier culture change seems to have been explained by diffusion and acculturation. This study offers an alternative perspective at both the ethnographic and theoretical levels.

Steward (1941a, 1941b, 1941c, 1955, 1960) argued that for all intents and purposes, the Carrier Indians were materially, socially, and ideologically similar to their White neighbours by 1940. In other words, the Carriers had been completely acculturated and little, if anything, remained of prior economic activities and social institutions. Steward's conclusions were in turn extensions of an argument made decades earlier by the Catholic priest and ethnographer, Adrian Morice (1892), who had lived in the Carrier's homeland from 1885 to 1904. Morice (various) declared that all Athapaskan groups (the language family which includes the Carriers) had a propensity to borrow traits from other neighbouring cultures to the point where it was difficult to differentiate the borrowed phenomena from prior Athapaskan traits. Thus, to Morice (1892) and Steward (1936), Carrier culture and society reflected extensive borrowings from neighbouring northwest coast groups. This model was used by Steward (1936) and reworked into the concept of historical determinism (Steward 1960). Based on this approach, Steward (1941a, 1941b, 1941c) then suggested that changes in Carrier social and cultural institutions and patterns



reflected the impact of diffusion and other historical factors. This contrasts with his detailed account of Shoshone social structure as an outcome of adaptations to the research base of the Great Basin of the western United States (Steward 1938). To Steward, the resource base of the Carrier homeland was rich enough that historical factors, such as diffusion, determined the structure of the society, with cultural ecological factors relatively unimportant. Prior to Euro-Canadian penetration of the region, the Carriers had given up a basic band level of organization, replacing it with a modified northwest coast pattern (Steward 1955). Later, this too was discarded in favour of a society similar to that of Euro-Canadians, who had moved into the region in substantial numbers after 1900. The outcome by 1940 was a community of nuclear families, an emphasis on individual wealth accumulation, and the holding of private property (Steward 1941a, 1941b, 1941c, 1960).

Research carried out in the 1970s revealed some theoretical and substantive problems when compared to earlier accounts, and the need to present a detailed ethnographic and ethnohistorical picture as a prelude to any discussion of Carrier culture change. Preliminary research in 1974 and 1975 indicated that the economic base of the Carrier Indians living in the Stuart Lake area (where Steward and I conducted our research thirty-five years apart) contradicted earlier assertions about the demise of the bush economy (that is, the economy based on hunting, trapping, and fishing) and the isolating impact of wage labour. As shown in detail in subsequent chapters, most families depend directly (through production) or indirectly (through sharing and exchange) on bush resources for a substantial portion of their



food. Similarly, more detailed ethnographic research conducted between 1975 and 1977 indicated that the social framework within which production and exchange took place was non-capitalist in origin and structure. Further, commodities obtained by individuals and households from the larger industrial economy were redistributed to other members of the community through traditional social institutions. Far from disappearing, as one might infer from earlier accounts, continued access to bush resources remains at the core of Carrier Indian social reproduction. At the institutional level, kin ties traced through male and female lines and links provided a nexus within which production rights and exchange obligations were defined and maintained. Instead of collapsing under external pressures, Carrier social relations remain complex, and differ in fundamental ways from those of their Euro-Canadian neighbours. The acculturation model of Steward (1960) and Murphy and Steward (1956) had underestimated the material and institutional basis of twentieth century Carrier communities and the nature of the relationship between Carriers and the dominant Canadian society. For example, the clan-potlatch system, which Steward (various) argued had disappeared, provides a means of redistributing to the community cash and industrial goods obtained by individuals. Steward also could not have foreseen the stabilizing influence of government social service programs, expanded to include Indians in the 1950s and 1960s. In reinterpreting the Carrier data, we are faced with the seeming paradox that non-capitalist forms of production and exchange have become more, not less, important in the face of industrial capitalist penetration of an indigenous homeland, and that they have important functions in





maintaining the bush mode of production. In other words, rather than dissolving Carrier society, the very forms of capitalist penetration may have made prior frameworks of production and exchange more important as dependence on bush resources and transfer payments increased. The expansion of the bush economy itself in the 1960s, as detailed below, was also facilitated by cash income derived from the state in the form of Old Age Pensions, Family Allowance, and other sources which do not depend on wage labour or commodity production. In part, through detailed ethnographic and historical material, I am returning to Steward's (1955) original intention - to locate the analysis of any society in ecological and historical contexts. As such, I argue for an ecologically and historically informed anthropology as a means of answering some fundamental questions: one, what is the material and institutional basis of Carrier communities, and two, what does happen to prior modes of production and exchange when capitalism comes?

At one level, this thesis is a contribution to Athapaskan ethnology. But further than that, it argues for the use of a particular approach in analysing the internal structure of an indigenous community and the institutions which maintain the Indian population within the larger Canadian society - a society which is industrial and capitalist. But there are several possible approaches to the study of culture change and continuity, some of which have been applied to Canadian Indians. Acculturation theory has already been mentioned (Murphy and Steward 1956), and while its utility in understanding Carrier culture change has been questioned, other important studies cast in this perspective exist (Leacock 1954). Another approach



gaining wide use, dependency theory, argues that Indians eventually get inserted into the class structure of an industrial, capitalist society as wage labourers or even as a class of permanently unemployed people. Drawing upon the metropolis-hinterland perspective within the dependency paradigm, attention has been drawn to the process by which Indians have been proletarianized, or transformed into wage labourers (Davis 1971, Elias 1975, Stymeist 1975). A third approach, transactional analysis, attempts to locate change in the decisions of individuals, who evaluate the costs of options (Salisbury 1976). All of these approaches have been applied to subarctic hunters and trappers, and have some utility in understanding the relations between indigenous populations and the larger Canadian society. I will return to examine their utility and limitations; however, the approach which seems to provide the best framework for the presentation of Carrier ethnographic and historical data in this instance is that of the articulation of modes of production, an approach which incorporates ecological and historical perspectives by analysing the specific local conditions, over time, of encounters between Europeans and Indians (Asch 1979a, Lee 1979, Orlove 1980), and which has found recent use in the study of subarctic hunters and trappers (Asch 1979a, 1979b; Tanner 1979) and African hunters and gatherers (Lee 1979). This approach is detailed below, after which the other approaches are discussed.

But the overriding problem which any study of Indians in northern British Columbia must address is the presence of a hunting, trapping, and fishing economy extant in a region the economy of which is dominated by industrial capitalism through the operations of industrial corporations, and the ultimate incorporation of the region





itself as a resource hinterland in an international economic system. Through the use of the concept 'articulation of modes of production', the importance of the bush economy today to the Indian people will be shown as the outcome of a process which saw Indian resources and labour moving from an integral part of mercantile capitalism to an irrelevant factor in the use of the region's resources by industrial capitalism. The ways in which particular institutions were changed by these forces will be described. Thus, the continuation of hunting, trapping, and fishing and the reproduction of non-capitalist social institutions reflect not so much adherence to tradition, but rational resource use patterns by a population whose labour and services are irrelevant to the present uses of the region by capitalist interests, and whose access to other resources such as wage labour is limited by that very marginality. To arrive at these conclusions, we must argue against earlier assumptions at the substantive and theoretical levels. Substantively, detailed ethnographic and ethnohistorical material is presented in following chapters, locating the Carriers ecologically and historically within the region. Theoretically, the research and mode of presentation of the data have been influenced by the concept of articulation of modes of production. This concept can be thought of in two parts: one, mode of production itself, which directs attention to certain factors, most importantly the control of the means of production; and two, the structural relationship, or articulation between populations or groups which have been distinguished on the basis of having different modes of production, and the kinds of social institutions which maintain the modes.



## Modes of Production

The theoretical underpinnings of the concept mode of production lie with Marx (O'Laughlin 1975), but its application within anthropology involves a linkage of ecological and economic data (Godelier 1977, Lee 1979, Orlove 1980, Terray 1972). A mode of production refers to the technological and social dimensions of the ways in which a society, or social formation, carries out production and exchange - that is, its material reproduction (Asch 1979a:88, O'Laughlin 1975). The technological aspect, known as the forces of production, consists of the ways in which resources are obtained, goods are produced and distributed, and labour organized. The actual technology, and knowledge required to operate the technology, can be subsumed under the phrase 'means of production'. Thus, for a northern trapper, the trapline and the knowledge of the locations of fur-bearing animals are included as means of production. The social dimension of this approach, the relations of production, calls attention to the ownership and control of the means of production and the ways in which goods are distributed (Cunningham 1977:38, Hedley 1979:283). As a conceptual tool, the notion of a mode of production focuses attention on certain aspects of a social formation, stressing the importance of dealing with what are termed the forces and relations of production (O'Laughlin 1975:354). The use of that concept in this study underscores the point that we are dealing with a particular social framework within which production and exchange take place, specifically patrilocal trapping groups and matrilineal clans, and that changes in the Carrier mode of production have followed the integration of the region into the capitalist mode of production. Key



elements in the concept of mode of production are the characteristics of the technology, or means of production, the ownership of the means of production, and the ideological expressions of this ownership. For example, Asch (1979a:91) indicates that the Slavey Indians of the Northwest Territories of Canada had a mode of production in which land and raw material were collectively controlled by the Slavey as a whole - not just by local production groups. The way in which this system of resource use was maintained reflects the importance of kinship as an idiom for relations of production:

These relations of production were expressed juridically by a kinship system that, through the use of lateral extensions, incorporated the rights of local production group membership to all Slaveys (and indeed all Dene); an inheritance system that forbade the transmission of land, raw materials, technology and, indeed, "special" hunting knowledge from one generation to another; and a marriage system that required for its operation the continual outmovement of members of each local production group. (Asch 1979a:91)

Tanner (1979) presents a model of Mistassini Cree relations of production in which relationships to land and resources are mediated through animals, thereby effectively preventing individuals from claiming absolute ownership of tracts of territory. Both Asch's and Tanner's perspectives will be analysed in greater detail in a later chapter, and compared to Carrier relations of production which emphasize the inheritance of the means of production at the local level through patrilineal ties.

Other uses of the concept of mode of production are found outside of the Canadian subarctic. Lee (1979) has organized his detailed description of an African hunting and gathering society, the !Kung, around the notion of a foraging mode of production, within which is reproduced "a collective, nonexclusive ownership of land and





resources." (Lee 1979:117) Hedley (1979) portrays family farms in Alberta as an example of a domestic mode of production, indicating that a family was the unit of production and also owned the means of production - the farm. Terray (1972) argues that a lineage mode of production exists in Africa, wherein the control of resources (which includes the reproductive capacities of women) lies with lineages, and more particularly with the elders of a lineage.

Without intending to contribute to a proliferation of terms for various types of modes of production, the Carriers are presented here as having a bush mode of production. This phrase calls attention to two related aspects of Carrier life: one, that the Carriers are materially dependent on the bush for important resources; and two, that there exists a social framework within which rights to resources are reproduced. These two aspects can be thought of as the material and institutional basis of the Carrier bush mode of production. Rights to resources are controlled in part through patricentric production groups, expressed by the Carriers as having production rights in one's father's country. While access to certain bush resources is thus controlled at the production level by these social relations, individuals are tied together in a network of reciprocal obligations, within which bush resources, trade goods, cash, and services are redistributed. The formal part of the exchange system is reproduced through matrilineal descent, through which three named descent groups are maintained in a system of reciprocal obligations.



The mode of production described for the Carriers follows in part Asch's (1979b) Dene bush mode of production. Like the linguistically related Dene of the Northwest Territories, the Carriers utilize and depend on resources from the bush, and have a technology and social relations which facilitate the use of the resources by more than just the direct producers. But the technology and social institutions differ. Carrier technology was traditionally not as portable as that of the Slaveys and other Dene, and key salmon fishing sites and fish weirs were controlled by local groups. Prior to the emergence of the patrilocal groups, matrilineal descent groups and potlatching provided the basis for the ownership of the means of production and the redistribution of resources throughout the community. This contrasts with the lack of descent groups among the Slaveys, and an exchange network which followed bilateral kinship connections.

But the notion of a bush mode of production calls attention to the material base of Dene, and Carrier, society (that is, to the role of bush, or subsistence resources) and the social institutions which provide a means of gaining access to bush resources through redistribution. We can see the Carrier bush mode of production as a regional variation of a larger Dene bush mode of production. Another perspective which emphasizes subsistence production is Lee's (1981) foraging mode of production. Again, the institutional and technological arrangements differ from the Carriers.

Thus, the mode of production characteristic of the Carrier Indians of Stuart Lake in the 1970s is one in which subsistence production, through hunting, trapping, and fishing, remains important. The producers own and control the means of bush production - fish nets, trap-



lines, and other items. Access to particular resource areas, particularly traplines, is associated with demonstrable kinship ties to previous producers, creating patrilocal trapping groups.

But in today's world economy (Wallerstein 1976), no mode of production operates in isolation from other ones, particularly given the extensive distribution of the capitalist mode of production. An important task is to analyse not only the internal coherence of a particular mode of production, but also the relationships between various modes, particularly those which stand in dominant or subordinate positions. Lee's (1979:2) appraisal of the necessary direction of anthropological research addresses this issue:

Although our ultimate goal is to use data on hunter-gatherers to illuminate human evolution, we must acknowledge that nowhere today do we find, in Sahlin's apt phrase, hunters living in a world of hunters. All contemporary hunters are in contact with agricultural, pastoral, or industrial societies and are affected by them. Therefore, the first order of business is carefully to account for the effects of contact on their way of life. Only after the most meticulous assessment of the impact of commercial, governmental, and other outside interests can we justify making statements about the hunter-gatherers' evolutionary significance.

The means to understand the relationship between the various types of societies described by Lee is embodied in the notion of 'articulation of modes of production', around which the data in this study have been organized.

#### Articulation of Modes of Production

There are two modes of production in the Stuart Lake area of British Columbia: the Carrier bush mode of production, briefly described above, and the industrial capitalist mode of production, the operation of which has identifiable impacts on the Carriers.





Within the capitalist mode of production are two sectors which have had varying impacts, at different times, on the Carrier Indians. The two sectors, industrial-commercial and government, have not necessarily acted in concert. As detailed below, industrial operations by themselves may have led to a complete dissolution of Carrier economy and society, but state transfer payments, such as pensions, have facilitated the maintenance of the bush economy in recent years. In other words, the state, through its social service programs, has muted to some extent the impact of industrial operations.

The relationship between the capitalist and bush modes of production can best be seen as one of articulation in which Carrier social institutions provide the logic of social reproduction for the bush mode of production. But the relationship between the two modes is not equal. As this study demonstrates, the reproduction of the Carrier bush mode of production is ultimately dependent on the ways in which the region is used as a resource hinterland by industrial capitalism. Therefore, the perspective adopted here is that the Carrier economy and society can best be seen as a mode of production articulated in a social formation dominated by the capitalist mode of production and its relations of production. The present structure, and operation, of Carrier society is understood, in part, as the outcome of the process of increasing incorporation into, and domination by, Canadian society, which is industrial and capitalist. However, before proceeding any further, it is necessary to clarify the use and importance of the concept of articulation of modes of production in anthropology, particularly given its somewhat limited use in subarctic studies (For one example, see Asch 1979b).



Articulation as a concept applied to modes of production has two main uses: one, to refer to functional relations between the elements contained within a single mode of production (sometimes referred to as a correspondence between instances)(Althusser 1969, Hindess and Hirst 1975); and two, to refer to relationships between two different modes of production (Wolpe 1980). The latter use is adopted here, with articulation seen as referring to the relationship "between the reproduction of the capitalist economy on the one hand and the reproduction of productive units organized according to pre-capitalist relations and forces of production on the other." (Wolpe 1980:41) The issues of dominance and autonomy are part of the use of the concept of articulation. As used here, articulation refers to the integration of two or more modes of production within a single social formation dominated by one of the modes and its relations of production. Thus, while we may delineate a separate Carrier bush mode of production as a heuristic device, the overall analysis of change must take into account the extent to which Carrier social reproduction depends on state and corporate influences. The notion of structurally interdependent, or articulated, modes of production has been dealt with at length in the literature outside of the subarctic (Anderson 1974, Bradby 1975, Cliffe 1976, Dupré and Rey 1978, Foster-Carter 1978, Godelier 1972, Gudeman 1978, Gutkind and Wallerstein 1976, Kahn 1978, Mandel 1977, O'Laughlin 1975, Seddon 1978, Wolpe 1975, 1980). While the continuation of subordinate modes of production within a single social formation depends on relationships with the dominant one, neither can be considered static; both are undergoing change, and articulation itself addresses historically specific situations (Kahn



1978:122, O'Laughlin 1975:365, Seddon 1978:97-98). For example,

O'Laughlin (Ibid.) cautions that:

... it is important not to isolate one's analysis of the precapitalist mode of production from the dynamics of capitalist development, lest we ascribe to tradition that which is in fact determined by the articulation of capitalist and precapitalist modes of production.

Seddon (1978:97-98) reiterates the need to recognize increasing dominance and the specific circumstances which surround articulation:

The special characteristics of the capitalist mode of production ensure that the articulation of capitalist and pre-capitalist modes results in the growing dominance of the former and increasing subordination of the latter, but beyond this general rule lies the need for an investigation, in each instance, of the specificity of the articulation in a series of conjunctures to identify the determinants of the individual history of a particular social formation.

One of the most important questions raised through the concept of articulation is what happens to the subordinate mode of production. Like mode of production, the concept of articulation can be traced to Marx, who argued that the expansion of capitalism necessarily entails the ultimate dissolution of other modes of production (Marx and Engels 1968:38). This view was taken up by others who argued that capitalism dissolves non-capitalist modes (Frank 1969), or may reinforce non-capitalist relations of production in order to extract surplus value entirely through trade (Bradby 1975). Other writers point to a dual role of capitalism. Wolpe (1975:244-248), for example, argues that non-capitalist modes of production may be restructured, or eliminated, while aspects may be retained to facilitate capitalist exploitation. Specific examples of the latter are drawn from South Africa, where indigenous agricultural production is maintained as a part of a domestic economy which supplies food for migrant wage labourers in South African industrial operations (Ibid.). The outcome





is complex, and dependent on both the ways in which capitalism penetrates a region, and the structure of the local non-capitalist mode of production. These latter modes either stand in the way of capitalist operations, or serve as a means of realizing surplus value, either directly through the forced appropriation of Native land and labour, or indirectly through existing relations of production and exchange. The fur trade in Canada represents an example of the latter; Indian trappers produced furs in return for imported commodities. Profits were made at the exchange level, not through the direct appropriation of Indian labour (Ray 1974, Ray and Freeman 1978). As Bradby (1975:129) aptly comments: "Capitalism has different needs of pre-capitalist economies at different stages of development." Bradby (1975:129) further indicates the direction which has been taken in the present study:

As this theory (articulation) assumes neither universal destructiveness on the part of capitalism nor a general tendency towards the preservation of pre-capitalist modes of production, the task of analysis will be to discover what are the historical conditions which lead to either of these tendencies in particular cases.

A specific application of the approach described by Bradby (Ibid.) is found in Dupré and Rey (1978), who describe the stages of capitalist penetration in part of Africa. In an initial stage, capitalism maintains the indigenous mode of production, but exploits the contradictions. In concrete terms, Dupré and Rey (1978:201-202) show that in lineage based societies, elders were able to exchange people as slaves with European traders. At a later stage, European powers established colonial rule in the regions, with the explicit goal of dominating the indigenous population. However, the traditional



economic base was retained in so far as it served the interests of the colonial government. In the final stage, capitalism operates in the former colonies without the need for a colonial apparatus. As Dupré and Rey (1978:207) indicate, the final stage creates a social formation with a complex articulation of the indigenous mode of production, the colonial political apparatus from the previous stage, and articulated components of the capitalist system itself. The outcome of this articulation is a reduction in the range of operation of the traditional mode of production, and an inability of this mode to recover its autonomy (Ibid.).

Some parallels to the above situations exist in northern British Columbia. Capitalism first entered as mercantile capitalism, in the form of trading companies which could only obtain furs at the exchange level. The later expansion of state interests into the region can be considered internal colonialism. Indian rights were circumscribed through restrictive legislation and the establishment of reserves. Finally, the present situation in northern British Columbia represents a complex articulation, but one which has not resulted in the dissolution of a mode of production associated with the Indian population.

Articulation addresses a different issue than acculturation, which also raises the issue of historical contact. But while acculturation refers to the transfer of traits from one culture to another, articulation refers to the stages of incorporation as one society is brought into subordination to the production requirements of another. This may result in the transfer of cultural traits, but the main emphasis is on the structural integration of formerly separate populations and their modes of production in a relationship of dominance and subordination.



### Articulation of Modes of Production in Northern British Columbia

With the preceeding notes on the concept of the articulation of modes of production, we can return to its application to Carrier ethnographic and historical data. Using this concept, this study shows that the contemporary dependence on bush resources by the Carrier Indians of Stuart Lake is in part an outcome of the historical relationship between the ways in which capitalism penetrated the region, and the ways in which Carrier labour, resources, and land were incorporated into the capitalist economy. This does not mean that the bush mode of production operates in isolation.

Goods and services are obtained from the capitalist mode of production through exchange, purchase, and other means, and redistributed or used in the Carrier villages according to notions of reciprocity. The two modes of production are articulated at the economic level: goods and cash originating in the capitalist mode are exchanged along kin lines within the Carrier community, or used to maintain subsistence production. Individual and household production and labour are appropriated by the community through norms of reciprocity and formal ceremonies, like potlatches.

Carrier society and economy were not dissolved, or completely acculturated, but retained a measure of autonomy that facilitated the maintenance of subsistence production. Throughout the historical period dealt with here, 1793 to 1977, the Carriers maintained access to bush resources, although the way in which rights were allocated have changed. Covering a period of almost 200 years, this study shows that the Carriers were essential to early mercantile capitalism, providing labour, furs, and food to trading companies. Later, as the





region became part of an economy which saw timber as the prime staple, Carrier labour and bush resources gradually became irrelevant, and the bush economy became important as a means of Carrier social reproduction. The importance of the bush economy today reflects the marginal position of the Carriers with respect to industrial capitalism. The institutions through which relations to land, to the capitalist mode of production, and to members of the community are structured reflect the continued importance of non-capitalist relations of production. These institutions, such as potlatching and matrilineal descent, prevent capitalist relations of production from completely reorganizing Carrier society. While transfer payments may go directly to individuals, exchange obligations serve to redistribute cash, for example, to the rest of the community.

Because of the paucity of ethnographic data covering the Tl'azt'enne, the bulk of this study is devoted to a detailed ethnographic account, drawing extensively on archival material and fieldwork. The intent is to move the understanding of Carrier economy and society away from a "shreds and patches" image (to use Lowie's (1920:441) aphorism) to one which is ecologically, historically, and structurally grounded.

While this study uses an approach which draws on insights from ecological anthropology and history (using, in part, Lee (1979) as a model), neither is used to entirely explain the presence or function of social institutions. In all of this, we must be able to accommodate the view that indigenous populations are not simply reactive bystanders in a process largely out of their control. During the course of fieldwork, the Carriers acted to protect their interests. For



example, at one point a barricade was erected across a rail line which passed through several reserves as a protest against the reduction in bush resources, attributed to the construction and operation of the line.

The preceeding material has indicated both the need for detailed ethnographic and historical information on the Carriers, and the utility in using the concept of articulation of modes of production in understanding social and economic change. However, as indicated above, other approaches have been used in the study of subarctic Indians. As they all provide possible alternative explanatory paradigms, they are discussed below, starting with a closer look at acculturation, then dependency theory, and finally transactional analysis.

#### Acculturation

Steward (1960) and Murphy and Steward (1956) used the notion of acculturation to explain economic and cultural change among subarctic hunters and trappers. Steward's use of this approach must be seen in conjunction with his theory of cultural ecology; acculturation was part of what Steward (1955:37) called historical factors in the study of culture change, and represented a statement about the extent to which cultural ecology explained social structure. Whereas the Shoshones provided an example of the primacy of cultural ecological factors in explaining the presence of social and cultural phenomena (Steward 1938), the Carriers were clearly meant as an example where a strict cultural ecological explanation was inadequate. For example, Steward (1960) stressed that Carrier clans and potlatching had been borrowed from the coast; he did not seek to explain their possible function as a means of redistributing resources.



To put Steward's Carrier study into perspective, we have to go back to his cultural ecological model. In his Shoshone monograph, Steward (1938:260-261) raised the issue of ecological and historical explanations:

... any system may vary only within limits, otherwise the people will obviously not survive... If wide latitude is permitted by subsistence patterns, the choice of cultural forms may be determined by purely historical factors.

This general hypothesis later developed into the twin notions of culture core and secondary features, which formed the basis of Steward's (1955:37) cultural ecological approach:

... culture core - the constellation of features which are most closely related to subsistence activities and economic arrangements. The core includes such social, political, and religious patterns as are empirically determined to be closely connected with these arrangements. Innumerable other features may have great potential variability because they are less strongly tied to the core. These latter, or secondary features, are determined to a greater extent by purely cultural-historical factors - by random innovations or by diffusion - and they give the appearance of outward distinctiveness to cultures with similar cores. Cultural ecology pays primary attention to those features which empirical analysis shows to be most closely involved in the utilization of the environment in culturally prescribed ways.

If the Shoshones were meant as an example of culture core, the Carriers were clearly presented as an example where historical factors were primary (Steward 1955:6-7):<sup>1</sup>

Where latitude is possible, historic factors may determine the nature of the society ... the environmental adaptations of the Carrier Indians of British Columbia first permitted change in late prehistoric times from composite hunting bands to a system of localized, landowning moieties and social

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<sup>1</sup> Steward's emphasis on ecological factors in determining Shoshone society has also been questioned. Historical factors, particularly the displacement of the Shoshone population from more productive river and lake habitats by American settlers, have led to a reassessment of traditional Shoshone social and economic organization (Davis 1963, Kehoe 1981:341-342, 553).





classes, when these people were influenced by the Northwest Coast, and second, allowed conversion in recent years into family units which own trapping territories and represent a special subculture of the larger Canadian sociocultural system.

Thus, Steward (1941a, 1941b, 1941c, 1955) concluded that the Carriers borrowed aspects of Northwest Coast culture, superimposing them on a band structure, and finally borrowed the elements of Euro-Canadian society. To Steward (1941b:283), these changes were outcomes of ideologies, without preceeding economic changes:

... the Stuart Lake Carrier changed from a band organization to a clan-potlatch system and later to a family system without any important modification in the pattern of their economic activities. These changes, therefore, were caused by the external influence of ideologies, a purely historical phenomenon, and not by any kind of 'economic determinism.'<sup>2</sup>

Steward (1941a:90) concluded that: "In social features the Carriers are little different from the white man."

While Steward's early articles on the Carriers identified diffusion as the main force of culture change, later articles (Steward 1960; Murphy and Steward 1956) used the notion of acculturation. Both of these fit into Steward's category of historical factors. However, the explanatory power of Steward's historical factors is limited, as Lee (1979:3) notes:

... despite Steward's allegiance to "history," his method does little to help us to understand the process of transformation a society may undergo through time. In one sense, history is a residual category for Steward, a catch-all for those aspects of a culture that ecology cannot explain.

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<sup>2</sup> Steward's (1955) contention that Northwest Coast society influenced the Carriers is tenable, and perhaps waits for archaeological evidence of extensive pre-contact exchange between the coast and interior. Olson's (1937) presentation of how the Tlingit incorporation interior groups into their exchange system by conferring clan affiliations provides a model of how the Carriers might have been incorporated into the coastal exchange system, and ended up with clans and potlatches.



A general model of subarctic Indian culture change emphasizing historical factors was presented by Murphy and Steward (1956), who argued that contact led to an inevitable dependence on foreign commodities (Murphy and Steward 1956:353):

When goods manufactured by the industrialized nations with modern techniques become available through trade to aboriginal populations, the native people increasingly give up their home crafts in order to devote their efforts to producing specialized cash crops or other trade items in order to obtain more of the industrially made articles.

Twenty-five years later, Murphy (1981:194) reiterated the premise that "contact with the whites had resulted in native dependence on trade goods."

To Murphy and Steward (1956), subarctic hunters and trappers like the Carriers and the Montagnais-Naskapi became involved in commodity production in order to obtain European goods which were theoretically superior to local products. Trappers became consumers, and "luxuries soon became necessities." (Murphy and Steward 1956:347) Trappers were held to particular posts through the power of debt and credit; kin ties within groups were replaced by individual links to a trader; the nuclear family emerged as the basic unit of production and consumption; and the bush economy became irrelevant to social reproduction. Finally, through acculturation, knowledge about the manufacture of indigenous items of technology disappeared (Ibid.:337).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Gross, *et al* (1979) use recent data from South America to criticise Murphy and Steward's (1956) notion that exposure to Western goods creates desires for them. Their conclusions parallel the ones in this study.



As described in subsequent chapters, Murphy and Steward's (1956) analysis of Carrier culture change did not predict the continued importance of the bush economy, or the retention of extrafamilial social institutions. In other words, their model cannot adequately deal with the present position of the Carriers. A fundamental difference between Murphy and Steward's (1956) account and the one presented here lies in the interpretation of the ability of the nuclear family to maintain itself economically solely through direct connections with the capitalist mode of production. Murphy and Steward (1956:338) argue that the Indian was "forced to buy the major part of his winter's provisions from the trader, and game formed only a supplemental food source." However, it is clear that the Carriers only expanded trapping to purchase store food as a direct result of diminishing access to traditional food sources, caused by depletions of key resources due to capitalist penetration. Further, store foods were then redistributed through the exchange system. To Murphy and Steward (1956), dependence on store food and industrial commodities was a direct consequence of choice, as individuals became acculturated. However, recent data indicates that dependence on store food was the outcome of necessity, while the bush economy maintained an important place in the overall economy. Nowhere in Murphy and Steward's (1956) acculturation approach is there a discussion of the role of the state and corporate interests in deflecting Carrier groups from continued use of bush resources.

The assumptions in Murphy and Steward's (1956) article appear to have been drawn from an earlier study of the Montagnais-Naskapi





Indians of Quebec by Leacock (1954), who argued that production for exchange replaced production for use as the Indian people became involved in the fur trade, driven by a desire to consume European trade goods:

With production for trade ... the individual's most important ties, economically speaking, were transferred from within the band to without, and his ... relation to other band members changed from the co-operative to the competitive. With storable, transportable, and individually acquired supplies - principally flour and lard - as staple foods, the individual family becomes self-sufficient, and larger group living is not only superfluous in the struggle for existence but a positive hindrance to the personal collection of furs. The more furs one collects, the more material comforts one can obtain. In contrast to the aboriginal situation, material needs become theoretically limitless. The family group begins to resent intrusions that threaten or limit its take of furs and develops a sense of proprietorship over a certain area, to which it returns year after year for the sake of greater efficiency. (Leacock 1954:7)

Used as an explanation for events in the Naskapi area, Leacock's (1954) description has some utility. But its application as a general model of hunting and trapping societies is limited. It assumes that fur production is a function of the availability of trade goods. The Carrier data suggest that trapping was carried out to obtain a limited amount of cash for specific purposes, but subsistence production and extrafamilial exchange of resources continued. Trapping is part of a larger set of subsistence activities centred on the bush. When one traps, one also hunts and fishes. Further, Leacock's approach assumes that economic and social independence is attainable through trapping, and that sharing obligations defined by kinship relations can be repudiated. Both of these are not applicable to the Carriers. In his study of the Mistassini Cree, Tanner (1979:11) also questions what he describes as "Leacock's contention that production for trade broke down the links of sharing and dependency between hunters and led to private acquisition and accumulation of wealth."



A connection exists between the approaches of Steward, Murphy, and Leacock. Leacock (1954) seems to have based part of her study and conclusions on Steward (1941a, 1941b, 1941c); Murphy and Steward (1956) in turn use Leacock's (1954) study to reaffirm their model of acculturation. However, the ethnographic and ethnohistorical data presented below do not substantiate the position that the Carriers became dependent on trade goods due to either assimilating the values or the need to consume items from the capitalist mode of production. Contact alone was not enough to create dependency. However, acculturation shares this outlook with a set of approaches grouped as dependency theory, which also addresses the transformation of Canadian Indian economy and society.

#### Dependency Theory and the Metropolis-Hinterland Perspective

Working within the dependency theory approach, several writers have described the incorporation of indigenous populations into industrial capitalist social formations in terms of class relations. Through subordination to external centres of political and economic power, Indian populations were transformed into landless wage labourers or, in some cases, into a class of permanently unemployed people, dependent on government assistance (Davis 1971, Elias 1975, Stymiest 1975, Watkins 1980). Many of the attempts to interpret changes in Canadian populations in terms of this approach have drawn on the metropolis-hinterland model of Frank (1969), who in turn developed this interpretive paradigm to explain events in South America, and the extent to which world wide capitalism penetrates and transforms all prior modes of production.



A definition of metropolis-hinterland extensively used in Canadian anthropology and sociology has been provided by Davis (1971:12):

Hinterland means, in the first instance, relatively under-developed or colonial areas which export for the most part semi-processed extractive materials - including people who migrate from the country to the city for better educational and work opportunities. Hinterland may also usefully denote urban under-classes as well as rural peasantries and rural proletariats. Metropolis signifies the centres of economic and political control located in the larger cities. Further, the term may denote urban upper-class elites, or regional and national power structures of one sort or another.

The metropolis-hinterland perspective correctly identifies the impact of external forces on indigenous societies, but also ultimately argues that non-capitalist modes of production are dissolved and Indians, for example, can be seen as part of the class structure of Canadian society. Proponents of this approach see Native people in the hinterland as dominated and exploited by the metropolis, eventually becoming proletarianized, or members of the lumpenproletariat class (Brody 1975:229, Elias 1975:2, LaRusic 1968, Stymeist 1975, Watkins 1977, 1980). Indian communities then become totally dependent on their position in the larger class structure of Canadian society (Dunning 1964). This approach is evident in several works.

Frank (1969:128) presents Indian communities in South America as "the underdeveloped products of capitalist development." Davis (1971:29) argues that Indians became dependent on the fur trade, and ended up as a poverty stricken rural proletariat when the fur trade ended. Jorgensen (1971:85) declares that Indian reserve conditions in the United States "result from the way in which United States' urban centres of finance, political influence, and power have grown up at the expense of rural areas." Watkins (1980:380) indicates a process





whereby Canadian aboriginal populations were separated from their means of production, and reduced to an underclass.

The most detailed analysis of change in a Native community from this perspective is Elias' (1975) study of ethnic relations in Churchill, Manitoba. Elias (1975) has expanded Davis' (1971:12) definition (see above) into a general scheme of cultural change in the Canadian north, and sees Native people fulfilling the role of a permanently unemployed class in the capitalist economy (Elias 1975:2, 9). Like Davis (1971:29), Elias (1975:5) points to the fur trade as the first stage in dependency:

By 1821, most North American Natives were committed to a life style that rendered them dependent upon the European traders for the materials needed to support that life style. Several generations of using guns, steel traps, metal vessels, fabrics and all the range of other trade goods had established fundamental ecological differences from an earlier subsistence life to one based upon the trade and commercial trapping.

Elias (1975:7) further argues that the monopoly in the fur trade obtained by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821 meant that the Indians were fully dependent on the fur trade. A final stage developed after Indians were separated from the land, their means of production, and became a landless proletariat and, finally a "permanently unemployed class subsisting on social assistance." Stymeist (1975) and Dunning (1964) reach the same conclusions. Like Elias (1975), Stymeist (1975) argues that unemployed Native people, surviving only on social assistance, serve to keep the hinterland non-Native population employed as social workers, teachers, and other occupations.

Dunning (1964) has argued that all Indian reserve communities in Canada are dependent to some extent on the national economy, creating what he has called the "Indian Status Person," dependent on government



subsidies for survival, and a member of a Native community the very existence of which depends upon government protection. However, as Dunning (1959) has also recognized, some Indian communities have been able to utilize government payments to maintain a subsistence economy. For the Carriers, transfer payments from the state are worked into the traditional exchange system, and provide a means of purchasing goods for redistribution or to refurbish the necessary technology for subsistence production.

Many of the above studies underplay the role of bush resources; indeed, Dunning (1964), Elias (1975) and Stymeist (1975) trace out a process whereby social assistance becomes the only resource available to Indians. However, as Usher (1981:177) points out, dependency and a continuing role for bush production are not necessarily exclusive:

The production of furs as a staple in northern Canada brought Native people there into a dependent relationship with European, and later, North American, capitalism and created a distinctive economy and society that persists in modified form to the present day. It transformed Native people into producers of goods for exchange yet, to some degree at least, allowed them to retain a subsistence mode of production.

Usher's (1981) comments reflect the articulation of subsistence economies with that of the larger state, and point to the need to see how goods and technology from the capitalist and bush modes of production are used in a community with extensive kinship ties.

Following Laclau's (1977) reappraisal of Frank (1969), we can argue that while indigenous populations participate in, and are exploited by, a world capitalist economic and political system, the transformation of non-capitalist producers into wage labourers may not be complete, and that state policies may, in some ways, protect the



non-capitalist mode of production while making it dependent. Elias (1975) and others have pointed to the economic and political forces which have transformed Indian groups, and pointed to the importance of government payments in social reproduction. But as Dunning (1959) has shown for the northern Ojibwa, the bush economy can be maintained, or even expanded, using transfer payments. Traditional social institutions can then function to maintain the bush mode of production.

A strict class analysis makes it difficult to deal with the existence of autochthonous institutions and modes of production which appear to operate outside of immediate dependence on the capitalist mode of production. We can accept the notion that Native homelands are systematically underdeveloped through capitalist penetration, and that in some cases the Native population, deprived of its land and in a position where even its labour is irrelevant, becomes a class of permanently unemployed people. But as Elias (1975:2) himself points out: "Indian socio-economic phenomena must be studied within the historic and contemporary framework of the development of industrial, class-capitalist society." At this stage of capitalist penetration of the region under study, the Carriers have not yet lost access to bush resources, nor dissolved their social institutions which serve as a framework for production and exchange. The outcome of capitalist penetration has, to date, been fundamentally different than that described by Elias (1975) for northern Manitoba. The main difference seems to be the continued operation of the bush economy, through social institutions which have their origin in traditional Carrier society. While the Carriers are commodity producers and do rely on transfer payments, the subsistence economy remains important.





It is also important to note that state and corporate interests within the capitalist mode of production may differ, and that initiatives from the state may offset changes induced by commercial operations. While dependency theory points to the role of capitalism in general, it is necessary to differentiate between the above interests. While the state facilitated capitalist penetration of the region, through the establishment of reserves, and other activities, its policies in the 1950s and 1960s provided a means of stabilizing the bush economy. For example, transfer payments provide cash for rifles and traps. Further government actions have strengthened the economic base of Tl'azt'enne communities by the construction of schools, salaried positions in the band office, and the transfer of some financial affairs to the band.

The expansion of the bush economy in the late 1960s followed both the displacement of Indian labour from sawmills and an increase in cash income derived outside of wage labour and commodity production. However, the expansion of logging operations also came in the late 1960s, and the two modes of production began to compete for different resources in common habitats.

While dependency theory, and its applications embodied in the metropolis-hinterland perspective and class analysis rightly point out the impact of state hegemony and corporate operations as major factors in change, another approach locates the source of change in the decisions made by individuals. This approach, transactional analysis or social exchange theory, argues, like acculturation, that individuals may choose to become involved in, and ultimately dependent on, trade.



### Transactional Analysis

Change cannot be considered apart from choice. We are faced in any analysis which deals with culture change with the question of the extent to which the actors are in control of their own destiny. At the group level, we could argue that Indian people in Canada have been subjected to forces largely outside of their control, and therefore questions of choice are irrelevant. In other words, dependency, as described above, is an outcome of capitalist penetration, and questions of choice are irrelevant. But on the other hand, individuals are presented at times with options, which have implications for independence and dependence. Salisbury (1976) has drawn upon transactional analysis to describe such culture change among Quebec Indians.

Salisbury (1976:56) indicates the need to study "the individually specific decision logics of each transaction," based on the assumption that individuals make choices based on the immediate situation. Rejecting the acculturation view of dependence on the fur trade emerging from the availability of trade goods, Salisbury (1976:52) argues that hunters and trappers evaluate the relative costs of bush production versus commodity production and, if desired, "could largely withdraw from dependence." What Salisbury (Ibid.) means is dependence on the Hudson's Bay Company, as the following statement indicates (Salisbury 1976:51):

... an Indian family head has many means available to him to avoid dependence on the HBC, if he feels that the terms of the transactions with the HBC are unsatisfactory. He does not depend on having to bargain with the HBC agent. The benefit/cost to him of trading with the HBC are measurable in terms of the costs/benefits of his other activities.



However, Salisbury does not make clear the extent to which an Indian family can provide for itself solely from bush resources. If it cannot, then an encounter with capitalism must take place at some time, although not necessarily with the Hudson's Bay Company. In other words, while the Indian hunter can terminate an unsatisfactory transaction with a particular organization, his livelihood is still dependent to some extent on commercial corporations and government services. Independence at the individual transaction level does not lead to independence of the Indian community from state and corporate services and goods. Dunning's (1959) study of northern Ojibwa indicates the dependence of a seemingly isolated Indian community on government payments.

So while Salisbury's (1976) approach indicates the need to study transactions, this study stresses the need to evaluate the larger historical process, and use that as the basis for conclusions about dependence. This larger perspective then emphasizes looking at the outcome of a process whereby the indigeneous population was incorporated into a larger economy and state, with little choice and how new relations of production may have emerged from material changes.

However, we can derive from Salisbury (1976) the importance of looking at the extent to which members of a community become conscious of their position in the larger society, and the means they choose to change situations. Some of the decisions will lead to increasing or decreasing dependence on the larger economy and society. This, however, can only be evaluated over time. But the notion of consciousness also forms part of the approach adopted here, as outlined by Lee (1979:434):





... the Marxist approach from mode of production deals with both etic and emic categories, the latter being the culture bearers' own categories for organizing experience and giving meaning to their lives. The Marxist approach recognizes above all that the populations we are dealing with are human, composed of actors who make conscious and unconscious choices based on their perceptions of external realities and on the set of rules or ideologies provided by their culture.

As Salisbury's (1976) article indicated, one does not necessarily have to adopt a Marxist approach to deal with choice. However, through the notion of articulation of modes of production, the emphasis is on the incorporation of the Carrier Indians as a whole into the expanding Canadian economy and state, and the ecological, cultural, and historical contexts of that process. Further, as Orlove (1980) has noted, there is no single ecological anthropology which provides the context, but rather several approaches which have attempted to understand the material basis of particular societies, and the conditions of social reproduction of small-scale societies incorporated into world economies.

### Summary

In summary, all of the above approaches - acculturation, dependency theory, and transactional analysis - have directed attention to the processes whereby northern Canadian Native populations were integrated in some fashion into the Canadian state. The historical and ecological situations of every group differ, and one objective of this paper is to describe how the Carrier bush mode of production operated within these contexts. Further, each indigenous population was articulated at the local level in different ways, and social institutions changed as the economic basis changed in various ways. While we can identify common Indian experiences which had led to changes (fur trade, reserves, epidemics), a detailed account of actual impacts



at the local level is required. Capitalist and non-capitalist modes of production interacted at the local level in a myriad of ways, which need to be spelled out for the Carriers. Finally, there is the need to present detailed ethnographic and ethnohistorical material to show the operation of Carrier society and economy today. The notion of articulation of modes of production facilitates this presentation, which has to deal with how an autonomous indigenous mode of production ultimately became dependent on the capitalist mode of production for much of its existence.

This study is an initial step in developing a perspective which neither isolates the local economy from the larger regional and national context, nor dissolves the local mode of production in the wider sphere. Throughout this study, I seek to answer the related questions of how and why a bush mode of production operates in a region dominated by industrial capitalism and how identifiable material changes transformed the social relations of production and exchange in the bush mode of production.

Through institutions and social relations which are non-capitalist in origin and function, the Carrier Indians of Stuart Lake reproduce a system of production and exchange which serves to redistribute bush resources and industrial products. The material basis of this mode of production involves hunting, trapping, and fishing - activities which in turn are maintained by continued access to cash through wage labour, transfer payments, and other sources. Marginal to the labour and service requirements of industrial capitalism in the region, the Carriers depend on the bush economy for their livelihood.

The impact of the incorporation of the region into a larger



economy and polity was not acculturation so much as the initiation of a series of changes which altered both the economic base and the relations of production of the indigenous mode of production. The shift from fishing with fixed weirs to net fishing and trapping on registered traplines lessened the control of the deneza over production, and increased the importance of patrilineal ties. The collapse of salmon fishing and its associated weir technology eliminated most of the material basis of deneza power, and increased the importance of the patrilineal trapping companies. This was accelerated by the use of migratory resources outside of deneza control. For example, moose appeared in the region about 1900, and quickly became a staple in the local diet. Wage labour further eroded the traditional power of the deneza. The formal registration of trapping territories in the 1920s and 1930s consolidated the means of bush production with individuals and groups not accountable to the deneza, nor dependent on any means of production controlled by the clans.

It appears that the transition from a clan-deneza-salmon system to a trapping group-moose complex was relatively free from internal conflict. The resources and technology which had formed the basis of the power of the deneza had largely been dissolved by the early 1900s, and the economy which developed in the early 1900s drew on resources outside the traditional power of the deneza.

The mode of production with which the Carriers reproduce their existence is described at the material and institutional levels in subsequent chapters, and linked historically and structurally to the changing forms of capitalism in the region over the past 200 years.





The traditional framework within which resources were produced has changed, and other forms emerged. Over this period, the need for Indian labour and products has declined, while the need for, and appropriation of, Indian land has increased. The implications of reserve policies and settlement programs initiated in the late 1800s and early 1900s are only starting to be felt. All of these factors provide a backdrop for understanding the present structure and operation of Tl'azt'enne social and economic activities.

In summary, this thesis emphasizes a process set in motion by the articulation of modes of production - a process which altered the material basis of Carrier society and led to the emergence of a new type of society, which retained prior institutions with different functions.



## Chapter 2 The Region and Its People

### The Region

This study focuses on culture change in the central interior of British Columbia, a region known as the Nechako Plateau. A brief overview of its geography, resources, and human history is provided in this chapter. The plateau is characterized by rolling upland hills lying between 750 and 1500 metres above sea level (Rowe 1972:76), and deep river and lake valleys. The Nechako Plateau merges with the topographically similar Fraser Plateau to the south (Holland 1964:68), around the Blackwater River, but is sharply bounded on the north and west by mountain ranges which rise to 2700 metres. The region was heavily glaciated in the Pleistocene epoch, and several extensive glacial lake basins were formed 9,000 to 10,000 years ago (Holland 1964:15). The region was substantially deglaciated by about 9,000 years ago, although archaeological evidence for human occupation covers only the past 4,000 years (Wilmeth 1978).

The region is drained by three major river systems, each of which supports a variety of resources. At the headwaters of these systems are several large lakes: Babine Lake, for example, is over 160 kilometres long, and drains into the Skeena River. Stuart and Takla Lakes, each over 90 kilometres long, drain into the Fraser River system, and a number of smaller lakes drain into the Peace-Mackenzie River system (see Figure 1). Indian resource areas are located within these lake basins, with villages located at strategic fishing places.



Temperatures in the region vary, depending on locations within the lake and river valleys and altitude. But the region as a whole is characterized by long, cold winters and mild summers. At Fort St. James, the nearest town to the study area, the January temperature averages  $-12^{\circ}\text{C}$  and July,  $14.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ . The coldest recorded temperature taken at Fort St. James stands at  $-57^{\circ}\text{C}$ . Snow-fall is high; Fort St. James averages 172 centimetres annually. Babine Lake, to the west, may receive up to 265 centimetres in a season. Spring ice break-up and fall freezing are critical factors in the movement of people in the lake basins. Break-up may occur as late as May.

It appears that from about 1750 to 1850, the region was in the midst of a mini-ice age, with temperatures substantially lower than today, and some faunal resources more characteristic of a colder climate may have been present. For example, caribou, no longer present in the study area, were reported up until about 1850.

This study deals with the Carrier Indians of the Stuart Lake watershed, located at the northern end of the Nechako Plateau, an area characterized by flora transitional between two forest regions, Subalpine and Montane (Rowe 1972). The forests in this region consist mainly of spruce and fir (Englemann spruce, white spruce, and some Douglas fir), both of which are important for the forest industry. The spruce-fir forest has been replaced to some extent by lodgepole pine, trembling aspen, and western white birch in burned areas or sections which have been logged out. Substantial fires occurred in the 1870s, due to actions by passing parties of gold seekers (Dawson 1881:31B) and large sections of forests were cleared in river valleys after the region was opened up for settlement in the early 1900s.





Lowland alluvial flats contain black cottonwood, once important in the manufacture of dug-out canoes. The river systems also contain extensive stands of willow, which provide browse for moose.

The present forest cover is a patchwork of spruce and trembling aspen, reflecting the dominant method of logging, which involves cutting timber stands of several hundred hectares. The primary regenerative growth of aspen provides a prime habitat for moose. The immediate Stuart Lake area is a patchwork of tree types. Logging operations in the 1950s removed climax vegetation, providing conditions favourable to secondary forest growth, and sections of forest have been kept clear for gardens, hay meadows, and transportation corridors.

The watersheds and adjacent mountain slopes support a variety of fish and wildlife; the extent to which these were used in the past century is documented in the following chapter, but a general overview indicates the range.

Dominant fauna include moose (Alces alces andersoni) and a variety of smaller animals used for food and fur: beaver (Castor canadensis), bear (black bear mainly, with some grizzlies found in scattered locations), lynx, marten, fisher, and others. Fish resources include a variety of anadromous species, especially sockeye salmon (Oncorhynchus nerka) and, to a lesser extent, chinook or spring salmon (Oncorhynchus tshawytscha) and sturgeon (white sturgeon, Acipenser transmontanus). Non-anadromous fish species present in the watersheds include lake char (Salvelinus namaycush), whitefish (Coregonidae), kokanee, or land-locked sockeye, trout, and suckers. Many of the resources available in the region are subject to periodic fluctuations



or cycles, and autumn represents the critical time to harvest the bulk of the resources. This is when the salmon have arrived to spawn and the berries are ripe.

### The People

The people with whom this study is primarily concerned are the Carrier Indians of the Stuart Lake watershed, specifically the members of the Stuart-Trembleur Lake Band, also known as the Tl'azt'enne, or "people at the head of the lake".

The Tl'azt'enne, as Carriers, are part of the Dene, or Athapaskan, language family. Carrier itself is grouped into three major dialects: Upper or Babine Carrier, centred on Babine Lake and the Bulkley River valley; Central Carrier, at Stuart Lake; and Lower Carrier, to the south. Adjacent to the Carriers are other Athapaskan-speaking populations: the Sekani to the northeast, the Tahltan to the northwest, and Chilcotin to the south (see Figure 2). Each village has its own sub-dialect, and it is perhaps more appropriate to think of the region in terms of dialect chains, rather than discrete language groups, somewhat similar to McKennan's (1969:99) suggestions of a dialect continuum in central Alaska. Also, given the continual erosion of proficiency in the Native language in many of the Carrier communities, linguistic classifications are misleading as objective indicators of contemporary populations.

Unlike the fur trade history in other regions in Canada, the establishment of trading posts in the Stuart Lake area did not create a nucleus for a trading post band. Instead, the fur trading companies erected posts at sites of existing Carrier villages. Because of this, we have a reasonable record of 170 years of continuous occupation of the village sites, and an indication of the stability of local groups.



The Carrier Indians were known under a variety of terms: Carrier, Porteur, and Takulli, to name only three. The first mention of Carriers appears in the 1793 journal of Alexander Mackenzie (1970:322), who presented a word list of "The Negailer, or Carrier Indians" of the Fraser River. Simon Fraser referred in 1806 (1960:199) to the "Carriers" trading into the post at McLeod Lake, east of Stuart Lake, which had only opened in 1805. Daniel Harmon, at Stuart Lake in 1810 (1957:134, 135) wrote about the "Natives who call themselves Tacullies..."; "... the Tacullies or Carriers." As Harmon explained in 1811 (1957:242):

The Natives of New Caledonia (the fur trading district which included Stuart Lake), we denominate Carriers, but they call themselves Ta-cullies, which signifies people who go upon water. This name originated from the fact that they generally go from one village to another, in canoes.

An Oblate priest, Morice, attempted to discredit the term on the basis of his stay with Carriers from 1885-1904:

The Carriers, as a separate tribe, are generally called Tacully, or Takulli by outsiders, on what grounds I never could find out. Among themselves they are today known as Takhelne... From their eastern neighbours they receive the name Arelne..., or "Carriers," though the custom which gave rise to this appellation, that in deference to which widows "carried" or packed a few charred bones of their deceased husbands, has long been abolished. (Morice 1892:111)

Some of these early terms are versions of the present Carrier word for Indian, dakɛʔ.

By 1811, village names equivalent to present ones appear in the historical record. For example, in 1811, Harmon (1957:141) "sent all our people ... to gather berries at Pinchy" (Pinchi). In 1812, Harmon (1957:148) "set off for Tachy" (Tachie). An 1824 census listed five villages on Stuart Lake: Nakausley (Necoslie), Peenche (Pinchi), Tache (Tachie), Kusche (kəzče, or Grand Rapids), and lqo-qo (a version





of Yekoh, a settlement on Cunningham Lake) (HBCA B.188/a/2, fos. 55d-59).

A couple of accounts also describe the village of Necoslie, at the outlet of Stuart Lake, and the form of habitation was undoubtedly common throughout the watershed. Harmon presented the Indian village there in 1811 (1957:134) as "a few small huts made of wood where they remain during the salmon season." MacLean's (1932:146) account from the 1830s is more complete:

The Indian village is situated in a lovely spot at the outlet of the lake, and consists of only five or six houses, but every house is occupied by several families. These buildings are of a very slight and simple construction, being merely formed of stakes driven into the ground; a square piece of timber runs horizontally along the top of this wall, to which the stakes are fastened by strips of willow bark. This enclosure, which is of a square form, is roofed in by placing two strong posts at each gable, which support the ridge pole, and the other on the wall...

While the people of the region were known collectively as Carriers, each of the village groups was also named, and groups of villages were known by a term which referenced them to their location in the watershed. For example, the villagers at the head of Stuart Lake were known as the Fond du Lac people in 1827 (HBCA B.188/a/15, fo. 14). Their term for themselves was, and is, Tl'azt'enne, or "people at the head of the lake" (cf. Morice 1893:26). To the Tl'azt'enne, the Necoslie people at the outlet of the lake are the kutenne, or "people at the bottom of the lake." Each villager also referred to him/herself using the suffix x<sup>w</sup>oten, "people of". Thus, someone from the village of Tachie was: one, a Carrier, two, a Tl'azt'enne, and three, a Tachiexwoten. As Harmon (1957:243, 250) wrote in the early 1800s: "Every village has its particular name, and its inhabitants are called after the name of the village ..."; "The



people of every village have a certain extent of country ...". The economic basis of the mode of production was accurately characterized in 1824 by the following statement on the Indians trading into Fort St. James: "The whole of the Indians dependent on this establishment are Carriers and only distinguished by the name of the different fishing places they have for salmon, which are five in number ...". (HBCA B.188/a/2/fo. 56d).

The earliest population figures indicate that about 250-300 people lived in the Stuart Lake watershed, a number similar to those in the other major lakes (Babine and Fraser Lakes). This seems to represent the optimum pre-contact population level (for population figures from 1824 to 1973, see Table 1).



Table 1 Population Figures: Stuart Lake Watershed, 1824-1973

## Local Group

Year	Necoslie	Pinchi	Tachie	Grand Rapid	Trembleur L.	Portage
1824	72	59	81	33	n/a	25
1879		40	32	22		
1890			46	35		
1891			47	36		
1892			48	34		
1893	152	34	37	9	12	22
1894	155	34	39	11	16	24
1895	159	35	40	15	15	22
1896	161	36	39	16	14	21
1897	164	39	41	15	15	22
1898	163	41	42	15	16	22
1899	170	43	48	17	15	19
1900	172	45	48	16	13	18
1901	172	45	48	16	13	18
1902	n/a	43	53	26	13	n/a
1903	184	39	59	26	15	18
1904	195	41	61	24	17	17
1905	192	42	64	26	19	16
1906	193	43	64	26	20	16
1907	196	46	64	25	21	15
1908	197	46	64	25	21	16
1909	n/a	46	65	25	21	n/a
1910	n/a	47	66	24	22	n/a
1911	170	38	42	9	28	36
1912	165	37	38	11	28	38
1913	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1914	172	38	38	10	28	41
1915	183	38	39	11	27	42
1916	187	35	47	13	30	42
1917	191	31	67	12	29	43

## Necoslie Stuart-Trembleur Band\*

1959	383	413
1960	395	434
1965	447	547
1966	463	558
1967	479	578
1968	517	593
1969	532	617
1970	562	636
1971	570	655
1972	575	685
1973	589	691

(Sources: HBC Archives, DIA Annual Reports)

\* Amalgamation of Pinchi, Tachie, Grand Rapid, Trembleur L., and Portage.





Like other Indian populations in Canada, the Carriers have been grouped into 'bands' by the federal Department of Indian Affairs. The Stuart-Trembleur Lake Band, the object of this study, consists of five villages and nineteen reserves covering 2453 hectares (in 1977) (see Figure 3). The population totals about 750, of which one-third resides off the reserves. Most of the reserves are small, and located at former strategic fishing places. The villages range in size from a couple of families to several hundred people. The largest village, Tachie, is connected by a gravel road to the regional commercial centre, Fort St. James, along with another smaller village, Pinchi. The other villages can be reached only by boat, plane, or, in some cases, by rail. In addition to the villages, there are several fishing and trapping camps located by smaller lakes in the watershed.

The band is run by an elected council and salaried administrative staff (such as a band manager), and the band office is located in Tachie, the largest village. Two of the villages (Tachie and Portage) have schools. The villages of the Stuart-Trembleur Lake band lack as year-round residents the Euro-Canadian agents usually identified with Native communities. While teachers remain for the school year, there are no permanent fur traders (or even a trading post), police, or even a priest. The priest and doctor make rounds to the various villages, but do not stay.

Non-Native residents of the Stuart Lake area reside in one of the sawmill towns or commercial centres, the most important of which is Fort St. James, located about 60 kilometres from the main Tl'azt'enne village. Additional logging camps are located in various parts of the watershed. Prince George, a city of over 60,000, is only about 150



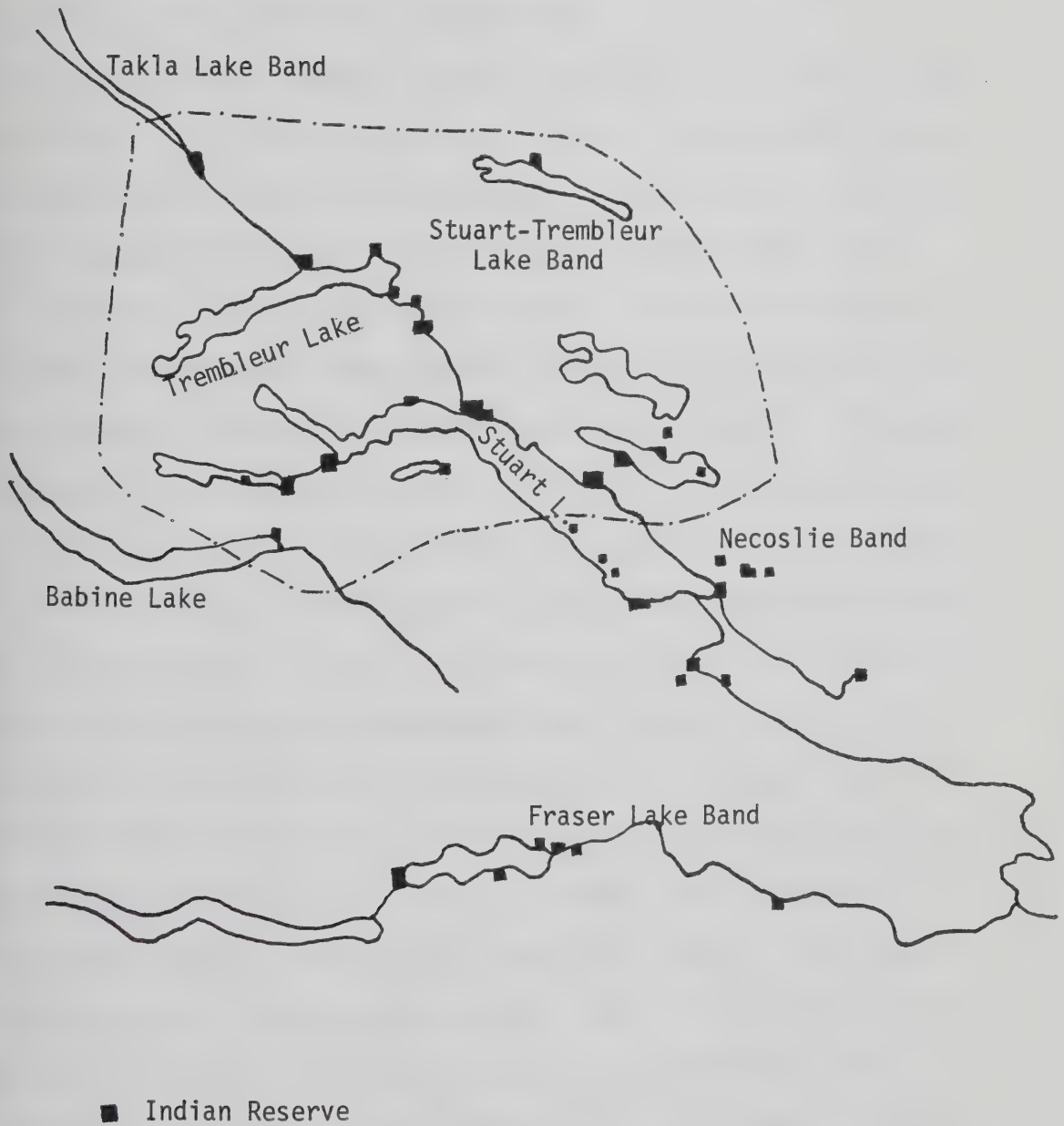
Figure 2 Indians of British Columbia

(Adapted from Duff 1964:14)





Figure 3 Indian Reserves in the Stuart Lake Area  
of Central British Columbia







kilometres from Fort St. James; the corporate offices of major logging companies operating in the Stuart Lake area are located here. In turn, Prince George is in a hinterland position to Vancouver and Toronto. Our concern, however, is with the Carrier mode of production and its historical transformation.

Topographical and climatic factors placed objective limits on the kinds of activities which could be carried out in the Nechako Plateau. The construction of a railway through the southern part of the plateau in 1914 opened up the region for settlement, but the early settlers were confronted by uncleared forest land and a short growing season. For those reasons, agriculture tended to remain small and concentrated in the southern valleys. The region itself was occupied by Europeans and Canadians as early as 1806, when fur traders established a number of posts. Thus, while Stuart Lake itself was one of the first places in what is now British Columbia to be occupied by Euro-Canadian interests, it remained one of the last regions to be fully incorporated into the kinds of economic development which occurred later in southern sections of the province. Agricultural development was concentrated south of Stuart Lake, along the railway belt and extensive logging operations had to wait until the 1960s, when the marginal spruce stands could be used by pulp operations recently established in Prince George. As the following chapters show, the Indian population went from a necessary part of early capitalist penetration to an irrelevant one as the region was incorporated into different types of capitalist production.



As a guide to organizing historical data, the following stages of capitalist penetration into the Nechako Plateau can be recognized: one, mercantile capitalism, centred around the fur trade, and dominated by the Northwest Company (1806-1821) and the Hudson's Bay Company (1821-ca. 1900); two, a settlement and neo-colonial phase, when government control over the region was instituted, and Indian land became crown, or government, land. Reserves were allocated, Indian agents appointed, arrangements made with religious orders for the education of Indian children, and land surveyed for eventual agricultural activities. This phase started in the late 1800s and continued into the early 1900s. After the construction of a railway in the region in 1914, the settlement phase was consolidated, and a third stage began. This was one of independent logging operations and small-scale mining activities, usually carried out by individuals who owned small sawmills. Both the settlers and small-scale loggers employed Indian labour. The final stage started in the 1960s, when large forestry companies established pulp mills in Prince George and consolidated timber holdings and logging companies in the Stuart Lake region. By the end of the last decade, Indian labour and resources had become irrelevant to industrial enterprises in the region, and the bush economy was threatened by the incorporation of renewable resource habitats into logging production. To understand this process, we have to start with a reconstruction of the Tl'azt'enne mode of production as it likely existed prior to the first stage of capitalist penetration.



### Chapter 3 Nineteenth Century Carrier Mode of Production

#### Introduction

This chapter describes the Carrier mode of production characteristic of the pre-contact and early contact period, and the power of the deneza, or clan leaders. The function of the clan system in providing a means of redistributing resources is also discussed. As indicated below, the nineteenth century mode of production revolved around a key resource, salmon taken with fish weirs controlled at the local level by clan leaders. By the end of the century, both the material base and the relations of production were being transformed.

The mode of production characteristic of the Tl'azt'enne Carrier Indians in the period centred around 1800 was based on control of production at the local level, and exchange relations with other local groups. In each watershed, then, were several local village groups, located at fish weir sites which were occupied for part of the year. The emphasis on local control of both resources and the appropriate means of production contributed to local group continuity and territorial integrity. The present distribution of villages is similar to that reported in the early historical accounts, dating back to 1806. But both the cyclical nature of the resource base, and the distribution of rights to resources and the means of production precluded local group self-sufficiency. The framework within which resources were controlled, or of production, was a clan system: resources at



the local level were owned by the clan members in that village, but the clan system also provided a means for sharing the resources of local groups. In other words, although local groups controlled production, access to others' resources could be obtained through sharing or exchange. The critical factor of this mode of production lies in the fact that the most important productive technology - fish weirs - was restricted in use to a few critical fishing sites, due to the non-portability of the technology and the limited number of places where fish could be obtained with such a technology.

Drawing on historical accounts, we can describe the Carrier mode of production, with the forces of production (resources, technology, and organization of labour), and the relations of production (ownership and control of the means of production, distributions of products, and social divisions) operating at the time of contact.

### Forces of Production

The primary resources used by the Carriers prior to extensive European penetration were, in apparent order of importance, fish, small game, and berries. Large game seem to have played a minor role until about 1900. Overall, the main resource was sockeye salmon, and the distribution of settlements reflects the importance of locating populations at strategic fishing sites. All of the resources were available within a regional watershed, although periodic failures of key resources forced local groups to seek assistance from groups in adjacent watersheds (see Figure 4).

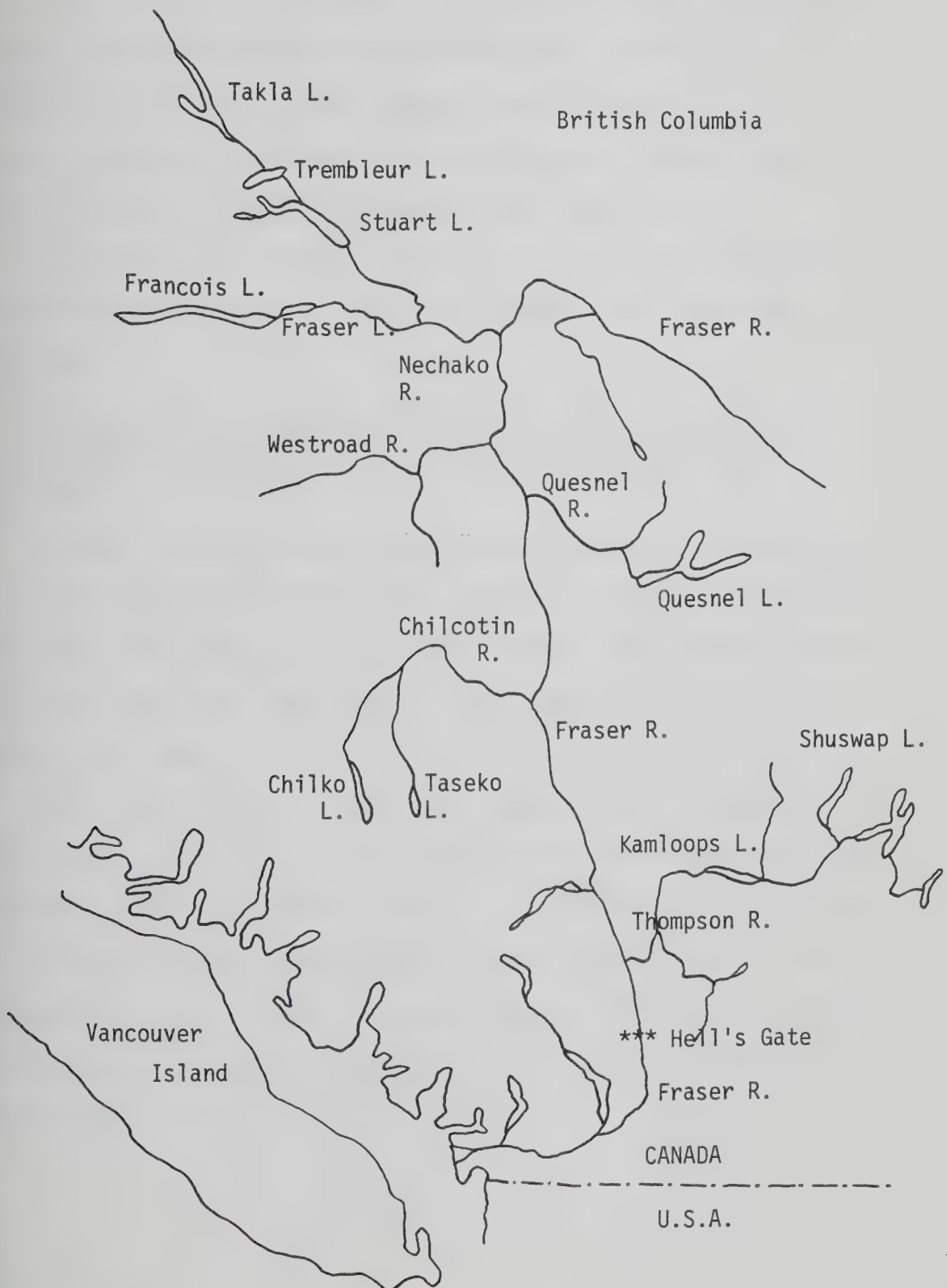
A variety of fish was available in the watershed used by the nineteenth century Tl'azt'enne: anadromous species included sockeye salmon, which spawned throughout the Stuart Lake system, and spring





Figure 4 Sockeye Salmon Spawning Areas, Fraser River Watershed

(Source: Cooper and Henry 1962)





salmon, available in the river draining Stuart Lake. Non-anadromous species included kokanee, a land-locked sockeye salmon which spawned in a lake adjacent to Stuart Lake, lake trout, whitefish, carp and a variety of suckers and other lesser fish (Morice 1893:73-74), including a small fish called thelmak, taken in quantity in the spring. Sturgeon were present in the lake system, although Morice (1893:75) doubts that they had much economic importance.

The importance of salmon, particularly sockeye, is stressed by a number of early observers. For example, Harmon (1957:152) noted in 1811 that:

were it not for the Salmon that come up these rivers every year more or less the natives would be truly miserable, as they have little else that they can depend on for a subsistence.

Nineteenth century resource use, then, can best be interpreted as a set of strategies focused on a key resource, fish, and secondary resources which increased in importance around 1900. Resource options included salmon, lake fish, berries, small game, and, to a limited extent, large game.

At the base of Carrier subsistence production was salmon, especially sockeye, which was air dried, smoked, and stored for winter consumption. Heads were rendered into oil to be used as a base for mixing with dried berries (Morice 1893:93), and roe was stored in pits and allowed to age. Chinook or spring salmon was obtained to a lesser extent below the outlets of lakes, but never reached the number of sockeye taken.

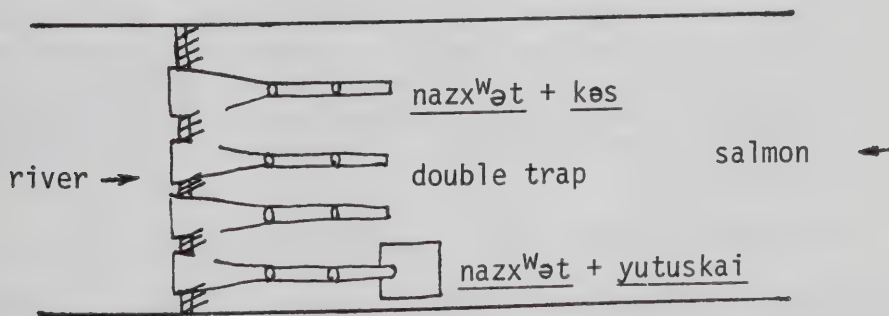


The importance of fish is reflected in the Carrier calendar, which starts with a period close to January (Morice 1893:106):

satčo, big moon  
 tsəz-səl, ? small  
 tsəz-tčo, ? big  
 čin-uza, month of the spring  
 təkəs-uza, month of the carp  
 tanx-uza, month of the summer  
 kesəl-uza, month of the land-locked salmon (kokanee)  
 thall-uza, month of the red salmon (sockeye)  
 pit-uza, month of the bull trout  
 ʔoh-uza, month of the white fish  
 panxən-net'səkei, 'during its half one navigates'  
 satčo-dinai, 'next to the big moon'

Fish were appropriated with seven different types of weirs and traps, depending on water conditions, and an assortment of hooks and spears. The basic unit was lattice work constructed across, or partially across, a stream, with traps set at intervals: conical baskets (naxwət), with narrow, tubular baskets at its end (kəs), or boxes (yutuskai) (efficient only at night, according to Morice (1893:86)). Traps were constructed of clear pieces of Douglas fir, spruce, and spruce root. The naxwət and kəs were only for salmon (Morice 1893: 87); another type of basket trap, k'uncay, could be used for fish, beaver, or muskrat. A diagram in Morice (1893: 88) indicates a common layout of various traps:

Figure 5 Fish Traps







Nazxwət and k'uncay are functional only in lake outlets or shallow streams; faster streams require a toboggan-like trap, called əs, constructed near the shore, and used for salmon, trout, ling, and other species of fish (Morice 1893: 89). Another similar trap can be used for slow streams, with the traps set in a weir across the stream (Morice 1893: 89-90). A box-like trap, thes-kai, performs in shallow streams, and a basket trap, təskai, placed in waterfalls. Nets of fibre made from the inner bark of willows, nettle, or wild hemp, snared sturgeon, grebs, and beaver. The Carriers also used leisters (Morice 1893: 71), and an assortment of lures and hooks.

Harmon's description of a fish weir in 1811 remains one of the best accounts of the traditional technology (1957:248-249):

The Carriers take Salmon in the following manner. All the Indians of the village assist in making a dam across the river, in which they occasionally leave places, to insert their baskets or nets of wicker work. These baskets are generally from fifteen to eighteen feet in length, and from twelve to fifteen feet in circumference. The end at which the salmon enters is made with twigs, in the form of the entrance of a wire mouse trap. When four or five hundred salmon have entered this basket, they either take it to the shore to empty out the fish; or they take them out at a door in the top, and transport them to the shore in their large wooden canoes, which are convenient for this purpose.

Harmon (Ibid.) also described the processing of salmon:

When the salmon are thrown upon the beach, the women take out their entrails, and hang them by their tails on poles, in the open air. After remaining in this situation for a day or two, they take them down and cut them thinner, and then leave them to hang for about a month in the open air, when they will have become entirely dry. They are then put into their store houses, which are built on four posts, about ten feet from the ground, to prevent animals from destroying them; and provided they are preserved dry, they will remain good for several years.

As Harmon's description indicates, salmon can be stored for several seasons. However, it appears rare that supplies lasted beyond the following spring.



Construction of the weir at the outlet of Stuart Lake, one of several sites in the lake basin, took place ten days to two weeks after the first salmon had been obtained by other means. This meant that the first part of every sockeye salmon run passed relatively untouched through the lake basin to the spawning grounds. For example, in 1850, the first salmon were caught on August 3, but two weeks later the weir was still being arranged (HBCA B.188/a/20, fo. 107d). In 1851, salmon were first obtained August 1, and the weirs erected August 19. In 1895, the dates were August 3 and August 20 (HBCA B.188/a/23, fo. 37).

Harmon's (1957:247-248) description of Carrier subsistence cycles around 1811 indicates the importance of salmon, and seasonal movements:

The Carriers reside a part of the year in villages, built at convenient places for taking and drying salmon, as they come up the rivers. These fish they take in abundance, with little labour; and they constitute the principal food, during the whole year.

Toward the middle of April, and sometimes sooner, they leave their villages, to go and pass about two months at the small lakes, from which, at that season, they take white fish, trout, carp, &c. in considerable numbers. But when these begin to fail, they return to their villages, and subsist on the small fish, which they dried when at the lakes, or on salmon, should they have been so provident as to have kept any until that late season; or they eat herbs, the inner bark or sap of the cypress tree, berries, &c. At this season, few fish of any kind are to be taken out of the lakes or rivers of New Caledonia. In this manner the Natives barely subsist, until about the middle of August, when salmon again begin to make their appearance, in all the rivers of any considerable magnitude; and they have them at most of their villages in plenty, until the latter end of September, or the beginning of October.



Another early commentator (McLean 1932:180) summarized the division of labour in the 1830s, and the roles of women and men in fishing:

Among this tribe (Carriers)... the women are held in much higher consideration than among other Indians: they assist at the councils, and some ladies of distinction are even admitted to the feasts. This consideration they doubtless owe to the efficient aid they afford in procuring the means of subsistence. The one sex is as actively employed during the fishing season as the other. The men construct the weirs, repair them when necessary, and capture the fish; the women split them up - a most laborious operation when salmon is plentiful - suspend them on the scaffolds, attend to the drying, &c. They also collect berries, and dig up the edible roots that are found in the country, and which are of great service in years of scarcity. Thus the labour of the women contributes as much to the support of the community as that of the men.

As Harmon (1957:247) indicated, a wider range of fish than sockeye alone was utilized in the watersheds.

In the fall and winter, whitefish were obtained near the islands in Stuart Lake, and in a few highly productive lakes in the watershed (Cunningham Lake, for example). Pinchi Lake supported an important kokanee fishery in the fall, and most of the lakes contained char. Weirs were constructed at the outlets of some lakes in the spring to capture spawning runs of suckers. The largest fish in the Stuart Lake basin, sturgeon, seems to have been relatively unimportant in the economy, primarily because of technological limitations on capturing it.

After fish, small game were most important. A variety of small animals, especially beaver, was taken in traps and snares of babiche (hide) wrapped in willow bark for moisture protection (Morice 1893:95-104). Deadfalls and pits were used for larger animals, such as bears. Bear, lynx, and muskrat were only killed in the summer for





food (HBCA B.188/b/11, fo. 91). Beaver, taken in the early summer and fall, constituted an important source of food, and beaver hunting territories were owned (HBCA B.188/a/5, fo. 141). The importance of small game is reflected in an account of a feast held at the Carrier village by Fort St. James in the 1830s (McLean 1932:157):

Immense quantities of roasted meat, bear, beaver, siffleu or marmot, were piled up at intervals, the whole length of the building; berries mixed up with rancid salmon oil, fish roe that had been buried underground a twelve-month, in order to give it an agreeable flavour, were the good things presented at this feast of gluttony and flow of oil.

Conspicuously absent from this account are large game. Moose did not move into the region until the early 1900s, and only occasional references were made to other large game. For example, Fraser (1960:326) commented in 1806 from Stuart Lake that "there are no large animals except Carruban (caribou) which is too sly for us." Caribou, called by a variety of terms (moose deer, reindeer), were mentioned in the Fort St. James journal:

1832 - an Indian killed two "moose deer" (HBCA B.188/a/17, fo. 43, dated March 16, 1832)  
 - Dechanyai killed a reindeer (HBCA B.188/a/17, fo. 45d, dated March 29, 1832)

1851 - All the Indians have now left here for their several Hunting Grounds - caribou are reported to be numerous in the Mountains opposite Tache. (HBCA B.188/a/20, fo. 129, dated March 6, 1851)

No references to caribou appear in the fur trade journals after 1851; their movement out of the Stuart Lake area is likely associated with climatic shifts and an increasing disturbance of their natural habitat by substantial numbers of gold seekers after 1860.

Morice (1893: 125-132) describes an extensive inventory of plants used by the Carriers, including six species of roots and bulbs, twelve species of berries, two kinds of plant stalks, three types of leaves,





lichen, and twenty-seven herbs for medicinal purposes. Berries, the most important of which was the service berry, were dried and made into cakes (Morice 1893:126). In the spring, when food supplies had run low, the inner bark, or cambium, of jack pine was collected (Morice 1893:76).

Several rituals and taboos mediated between the human and natural world. Bear snaring, for example, involved a potential hunter drinking out of a cup different from that of his wife, abstaining from sexual intercourse for about a month, consuming the root of a plant called tselep, of which bears were supposed to be fond, and, after the hunt, placing the skull of the prey in a tree, out of the way of dogs (Morice 1893: 107). Menstruating women were forbidden to eat a snared animal's head, heart, or the hind part, and prohibited from passing over snares or cutting salmon. Marten hunting involved a similar ritual as bear hunting, but with a shorter period of abstinence. Continued luck in beaver hunting required that the patella bone not be consumed (Morice 1893: 107). Lynx, associated in mythology with intercourse with women and called 'cousin', could not be consumed by women, or brought into a house through a doorway (Morice 1893: 108).

While the Carriers possessed an efficient technology for the utilization of bush resources, the structure of the resource base itself, and the way in which productive technology was controlled, required a framework for sharing and exchange between local groups. The key resource, sockeye salmon, was subject to regular cyclical fluctuations which differed in each resource area. But shortages in the Stuart Lake system could be overcome by obtaining salmon from local groups at Fraser Lake. Different salmon bearing streams have



different cycles, which means that every four years a large run of sockeye salmon can be expected, but the other three years will have diminished runs. The dominant cycle in Stuart Lake falls in what is called the 1901 line. This means that large spawning runs take place in 1901, plus or minus a multiple of four years. In other words, large runs should have been present in 1897, 1893, and, working the other way, 1801, 1805, 1809, and so on. The cyclical nature of the salmon was recognized by the Carriers at time of contact in 1806 (Fraser 1960:237), and an entry in the Fort St. James journal in 1815 summarized the cycle:

The salmon failed with us last season. This generally occurs every second year, and completely so every fourth year, at which period the natives starve in every direction. (Morice 1904:95)

However, sockeye in the Fraser Lake system (also on the Fraser River drainage) has a dominant cycle in the 1902 line, and sockeye in Babine Lake has a four to six year maturity cycle (Larkin and Ricker 1956:203). This means that a complete collapse of salmon in the larger region was infrequent, and local failures could be overcome by drawing on the resources of adjacent watersheds.

An analysis of the archival records of the Hudson's Bay Company indicates that salmon failures were recurrent in the Stuart Lake area, either due to the cycle, or the inability to erect a weir in time. Steward (1941a, 1941b) has suggested that salmon was a surplus commodity, enabling the Carriers to borrow a clan-potlatching system from their coastal neighbours. However, there is little evidence in the historical record to indicate that such a situation existed over an extended period of time. The situation appears to be more of a boom-and-bust dilemma, with starvation a recurrent theme. The problem



for the Carriers of the Stuart Lake area was how to maintain control of their own fishing sites, yet ensure access to those of other groups in adjacent watersheds during times of local resource failure. As described later, a matrilineal descent system provided the basic framework for both local control of resources and access to that of other production groups. Rather than seeing the clan-potlatch system superimposed on traditional Carrier culture, we can interpret it as a framework for the necessary redistribution of resources between local groups.

The following notes from the Fort St. James journal, 1825-1855, indicate the recurrent problems which the Stuart Lake Carriers had with sockeye salmon:

1825: for subsistence, greatest dependence is on salmon; without them neither the Indians or whites could exist; salmon procured in greatest quantities in Babine and Fraser Lakes; Stuart Lake frequently fails (HBCA B.188/a/5/145, 1825-26 General Report)

1830: "I understand the natives at the Village (Necoslie) took 11 salmon they are in need of them for they have been subsisting upon berries alone for this sometime past." (HBCA B.188/a/16/39, August 26, 1830)

1832: "Several Fraser Lake Indians there (Portage), it being the only place where they can get any fish to save themselves from famine." (HBCA B.188/a/17/33, December 17, 1832)

"Most of the Indians having been obliged from the failure of Salmon to go to the Babines have made but poor hunts." (Ibid.:33d, December 23, 1832)

"The natives all complain of the scarcity of salmon which will oblige them to have recourse to Babine Lake to trade what they can get there." (Ibid.:18, September 21, 1832)

1849: "Salmon numerous but the natives cannot get their barrier (weir) made on account of the high state of the waters." (HBCA B.188/a/20/84, August 28, 1849)





1847: two Indians arrived from Tachie, complaining of starvation and coming to see if any salmon had been caught at Necoslie (HBCA B.188/a/20/27d, August 24, 1847)

"The poor Indians are truly starving and should the salmon not make their appearance by tomorrow I will have to kill a young ox as we have nothing left in the way of food." (Ibid.:28, August 26, 1847)

salmon abundant - September 16, 1847 (Ibid.:29d)

1842: "During the summer few or no Indians had arrived from McLeods Lake owing to the Mountain Party of Indians having nearly being swept off by starvation 63 men, women and children have died." (HBCA B.188/a/19/61, September 27, 1842)

1851: "No salmon were taken last night, it appears the few who came up have all (?), & how the poor natives are to subsist throughout the winter God only knows." (HBCA B.188/a/21/8, September 21, 1851)

"All the Indians of the Post (Fort St. James) departed today in different directions, with the view of hunting, as they now clearly see there will be no salmon fishery this autumn not one mouthful of provisions have the poor creatures." (Ibid., September 24, 1851)

"A few Indians from Fort George arrived poor creatures they I much fear will suffer privations during the winter for they are destitute of a salmon." (Ibid.:13, November 16, 1851)

Three Sekanis arrived from McLeod Lake, reporting that starvation there had compelled them to leave, and that they intended to spend the winter at Fort St. James; the next day, Cut Thumb and his followers arrived from McLeod Lake - starving (Ibid.:18, 18d, December 25, 26, 1851)

1855: "I much fear we still have some trouble to weather out the winter as not a single salmon is caught here (Fort St. James) by the Natives." (HBCA B.188/a/21/116, September 23, 1855)

### Relations of Production

The literature on the nineteenth century Carrier mode of production indicates that resource areas were controlled at the local level, either by families, matrilineal descent groups, or the village as a whole.



Morice (1893: 203-204) described Carrier social structure as based on four named matrilineal descent groups, which he called gens, each with a totem, or nətsi, and a set of names, or sənkoh, held by clan members. Within each descent group were deneza, or nobility, who controlled the means of production. The descent groups, and their nətsi, were: ʔcəməšu (grouse), cayu (beaver), yəsilyu (toad), and təmt'enyu, or kwənpahwot'enne (grizzly bear). At the time of Morice's account, ʔcəməšu was the most powerful, and the last two mentioned were linked, presumably for ceremonial purposes, giving a triadic structure.

The descent groups were exogamous. The relatively small population size in most of the villages suggests that the local groups were also exogamous, and that village and clan exogamy maintained alliances throughout the watersheds. One local group, Grand Rapids, was identified by a clan name, Tsayu, or beaver (cayu) (Morice 1928), and Jenness (1943:585) indicates that villages south of Stuart Lake also identified themselves with a single clan.

The function of the clans extended beyond the boundaries of local groups. Through shared clan symbols (crests, or totems in Morice's terminology), much of the northwest was linked in a broad network of reciprocal obligations. For example, Morice (1930:xix) wrote:

... they have a number of petty chiefs, or nobleman, who alone own the land, on which their co-clansmen hunt for the benefit of their respective headmen. A number of clans, or gentes, divide the tribe which, in their eyes, are the source of a relationship at least as binding as regular consanguinity is with us. In fact, a native of, for instance, far off Fort Alexander, in the south, a man or woman of whom nobody had ever as much suspected the existence, would be treated as a dear brother or sister at Stuart Lake by people of the gens to which he or she professes to belong.



The clan system provided a means of maintaining exchange relations between local groups which had control of resource areas which in turn were subject to periodic fluctuations. Steward (1955) underestimated this function of the clan-potlatch system.

The clans were differentiated internally between 'noblemen' and 'commoners' (Morice 1892:112); the 'noblemen' possessed titles which in turn were associated with specific resource areas. Each clan had several of these title-holders, or deneza, who in essence controlled the means of production of the clan. Children of deneza were called "true children". The issue of whether or not there were classes on the Northwest Coast is still problematic (cf. Drucker 1939, Ray 1966, and more recently Ruyle 1973). The historical accounts point to a division between those who have access to certain resource areas, and those who lack such rights. Morice, however, does not provide an account of the exact relationship between 'nobles' and 'commoners'. The picture with which we can work is that resource areas were associated with titles, which in turn were associated with local segments of matrilineal descent groups. To have a title meant having the right to use a particular resource area, but bringing that land into production meant drawing on the labour of others - those who lacked a title, but still were members of the clan. Thus, the distinction between nobles and commoners can be seen as a relationship between title holders and clan members who lacked titles, but none the less had rights, through clan ties, to use the lands. In discussing the concept of deneza with Tl'azt'enne over the course of fieldwork, they indicated that the term also meant first-born. This in turn suggests that 'commoners' were actually the untitled second and third born, and





so on. The important point, though, is that there existed a structure by which local groups controlled production at the local level through the ownership of hunting and fishing sites. Other groups then gained access to the resources through the clan system. In turn, the system was reproduced by a descent system which stressed the importance of controlling resources through controlling titles.

Titles were transferred matrilineally. Most of the title-holders were male, but women could also obtain them (McLean 1932:180). A man's title usually went to his sister's son. It could also be transferred to a brother, sister, or a sister's daughter (Morice 1906:202). As Morice (1932:xix) commented:

... succession to rank and property is along the female line. A chief is replaced not by his own son, but by a son of his sister, because, as these Indians are exogamous in their marriages, his son belongs to a different clan, from which titles and hunting grounds must not be alienated.

Titles had to be validated by the successor. Following the death of a title-holder, the heir gave a set of six ceremonies, or potlatches (Morice 1890:147ff.), which could take two to three years to complete. The potlatches involve members of both clans and villages in a series of reciprocal obligations. As the heir comes from the same clan as the deceased, other clans provide services such as mourning, preparation of the corpse, carving of a funeral pole, and so on. Rosman and Rubel (1971) have developed a general model of Northwest Coast potlatching which stresses that potlatching groups are linked affinally. The Carrier data are unclear as to the exact links of the groups during the succession ceremonies, but in other activities one's father's matrilineage provides special services, and it is likely that this carried over into potlatching. For example, a girl's father's





sister made her menstrual head dress (Morice 1890:162), and today a boy's father's sister gives him his first hair cut.

Matrilineal descent provides the framework within which rights to resources are defined; succession potlatches in turn ensure that rights are reproduced over generations, and that a clear distinction remains between rights to produce from clan lands as opposed to one's right to obtain resources, through sharing, from a person who shares the same clan symbols. The historical and ethnographic data below indicate the extent to which resource areas were controlled by local groups.

The nineteenth century Carrier mode of production is described in general terms by Morice (1930:115):

Carriers and Babines were divided into clans, or gentes, ... to which corresponded the parcelling out of the hunting grounds, at the head of which were hereditary noblemen, or petty chiefs, with whom and for whom hunted the common people of the clan.

Elsewhere, Morice (1932:xix) wrote that the Carriers "have a number of petty chiefs, or noblemen, who alone own the land, on which their co-clansmen hunt for the benefit of their respective headmen."

As fish seemed to be the major resource, control of fishing sites was an important part of the mode of production. Morice (1910:139, 426) describes the control of such sites in the following terms:

Among the Carriers and Babines, even the setting of the salmon traps is regulated by traditional usage. No person will dare infringe on a family's rights to a better place in the weir. Likewise, important parties may enjoy the hereditary privilege of having their traps in operation, while others could not find room for one.

Everyone who has an hereditary right to set a trap in the stream is prevailed upon to contribute his share of labour towards erecting the weir.

The historical record supports Morice's generalizations.



An overview of the Carriers trading into Fort St. James in 1826 included this paragraph (HBC Archives B188/a/5/141):

The country being parcelled amongst certain families to whom it descends by inheritance and the portions of many it may be supposed being but poorly stocked with Beaver they therefore kill but few and a number who have no lands at all and are not permitted to hunt the animals on those belonging to others if they do not procure small furs such as marten which are numerous throughout the country and common to all they must avoidably be deprived of the means of providing themselves with the furs necessary they require - Beaver, independent of the benefit they derive from the skins, they will always endeavor to kill, it being a favorite article of food and in places where large amounts cannot be found are indispensable for the purpose of celebrating their feasts.

The next description of Carrier ownership of resource areas is provided by Sir George Simpson, who visited the post at Stuart Lake in 1828, and commented that beaver hunting grounds belonged to particular families:

Fort St. James is frequented by the inhabitants of 5 villages of the Carrier Tribe, who furnish about 25 Packs Furs value about 2000. The Hunting Grounds of those Indians are not extensive, nor are they well stocked in Beaver; but if they were common to all the Natives, would very soon be destroyed as the population here is considerable. The Hunting Grounds, as regards Beaver, however, belong to particular Families, who merely take from time to time such quantity as they require, and any encroachment, even by their next door neighbours, is tantamount to a declaration of hostilities, and frequently punished by Death; but the small Furs are common to all: they have not, however, until lately, directed much of their attention to small Furs, which are not numerous in this part of the Country. (Simpson 1947:19)

Simpson also noted that six Carrier villages were trading into Fraser Lake in 1828, with hunting grounds more extensive than those of the Stuart Lake Carrier, but also held as 'private property' (Ibid.:20).

Another description at about the same period is found in the Journal of Daniel Harmon (1957:255):

The people of every village have a certain extent of country which they consider their own, and in which they may hunt and fish; but they may not transcend these bounds, without



purchasing the privilege of those who claim the land. Mountains and rivers serve them as boundaries, and they are not often broken over.

Harmon (Ibid.) further commented that there was not much inter-village visiting due to murders and trespassing on other lands, which caused friction.

In 1888, the Government of British Columbia sent a circular to the Hudson's Bay Company posts enquiring about the possibility of establishing game seasons. The reply from Fort St. James was that:

... every family in the Indian Country still possesses its old inherited and well defined section of land, from Beaver hunting on which all other Indians are jealously excluded ... This ought to prove a powerful factor in the way of facilitating the operation of successful measures for the future protection of the Beaver. (HBC Archives B188/b/11/89-90)

The ownership of trapping areas is commented on again in 1918. In a report submitted to the B.C. Minister of Mines, the following statement was included in reference to the Fraser Lake area (B.C. Sessional Papers, 1915: 156):

Some outlying portions of the district are veritable paradises to the trapper, and while no one appreciates the knowledge more than the local Indian, a certain sense of honour forbids him poaching on the preserves previously trapped over by another. As a result of this the best trapping-grounds are left untouched year by year, except perhaps by one or two Indians for a period of two or three months each winter.

The descriptions by Father Morice are more encompassing. Not only were hunting grounds parcelled out among the main families or clans (Morice 1910:130), but fishing areas were also controlled. For example, Morice (1910:135) wrote that in September and October families were out fishing in Stuart Lake, and that:

... families or groups of related families have their traditional fishing grounds, particularly bays, capes, or islands, wherefrom they regularly set their nets for a few weeks to the exclusion of any others not in possession of the same rights.





The system was expansionary; while the clan structure provided a framework for the control of production at the local level, it also provided a means to expand into other areas - and conversely, for other groups to expand into one's area by gaining control of the titles. As Teit (1956:146) noted for the Tahltans, northwest of the Carriers: "Marriages between members of different clans and bands were encouraged because of the advantage of thus securing the right of hunting in different grounds." Morice (1928:81) described the expansion of Carriers into Sekani lands, northeast of Stuart Lake:

The Sekani had good resources from hunting grounds; Sekani men married Carrier women and the brothers of his bride becoming by reason of such an alliance entitled to hunt on those grounds. This was the great, one may almost say the only, excuse for unions which would otherwise been regarded in the light of mesalliances.

Jenness (1943:493) also provides an example whereby a Carrier from Trembleur Lake (which is part of the Stuart Lake system) was able to gain access to a prominent title in one of the Bulkley River clans.

Cross-cousin marriage was one of the means by which local groups both expanded their alliance ties and attempted to maintain resource areas within a restricted exchange network. For example, Jenness (1943:526) wrote:

The Bulkley Indians preferred a marriage between cross-cousins because it retained the family titles and privileges within a close circle and was more conducive to harmony.

The structural implications of cross-cousin marriage have been discussed extensively in the anthropological literature (Eggan 1955; Levi-Strauss 1969; Rosman and Rubel 1971). Steward (1941a, 1941b) at one time suggested that cross-cousin marriage facilitated the diffusion of coastal social organization into Carrier groups, but later (1960:736) indicated that his genealogies revealed no examples



of actual cross-cousin marriage among the Stuart Lake Carriers. However, both Morice's writings and an examination of the marriage records, dating to the 1870s, indicate that there existed cross-cousin marriage in theory and in fact in the traditional Carrier social structure. Morice, however, is somewhat contradictory in his writings. In one article (1906:201), he describes patrilateral cross-cousin marriage, but in others (Morice 1892:112) a matrilateral cross-cousin marriage system seems operative. The latter is more likely the actual system, particularly since members of one's generation in father's clan were called by sibling terms and those in mother's clan by a term which can be translated as 'cousin'. Ideally, a male would marry his mother's brother's daughter, but in practice it was only necessary to marry outside of one's own descent group. However, local group exogamy may have been as important as clan exogamy, thus preventing a situation where large villages could become endogamous. The literature is unclear on the exact relationship between clan and local group exogamy, but both the small size of villages and the present social structure suggest that one sought a spouse outside of one's own village and clan. Such a system then would tie together local groups which had access to different resources.

From records of marriages recorded in the church at Fort St. James, some marriage patterns can be discerned. Of fifty-three marriages between 1891 and 1941 which are definitely Tl'azt'enne, forty-five are local group exogamous and eight within local groups. Thirty-five were between Tl'azt'enne and Necoslie (Fort St. James) Carriers, two were between Tl'azt'enne and Babine Lake Carriers, one was between a Tl'azt'enne and a Takla Lake Indian, and another with a



non-Indian (Marriage Records, Our Lady of Good Hope Church, Fort St. James, B.C. Provincial Archives). These underline the patterns of local group exogamy suggested above.

The question of cousin marriage can also be dealt with by looking at the church records. Marriage between cousins, or other categories of kin, is allowed if a dispensation is granted by the priest. On the basis of genealogical reconstructions, and statements of dispensations, several cousin marriages appear in the record. Six marriages taking place between 1902 and 1929 were between first cousins (but from different local groups), seven marriages between 1908 and 1939 were between second cousins, and four marriages between 1894 and 1922 were between children of second cousins.

Steward (1960:736) has indicated that his genealogies at Fort St. James revealed no examples of cross-cousin marriages. However, the Tl'azt'enne data suggest that cross-cousin marriage was a means of linking local groups.

As the Carrier mode of production was based on local control of resources which were cyclical, no production group was entirely self sufficient. This inter-group dependence was the outcome of both the mode of production and the structure of the resource base. As Turner (1979) has suggested, hunters and gatherers seem to fall into two main types: those that restrict or control resources at the local level, and enter into exchange relations with other resource-owning groups to overcome the lack of self-sufficiency, and those groups which emphasize that all production groups have equal rights of access to resources in a 'band' territory. Turner (1979) represents these as Australian Aborigine and Cree solutions, respectively. The Carriers





fall into the Aborigine type, but differ in some respects from the model. Carrier technology, or at least the most important technology - fish weirs - is not portable. With a limited number of fishing places which can be utilized with their technology, the Carriers in the Stuart Lake watershed have developed a mode of production which ensures that owner-production groups will retain control of the key means of production at all times. A similar pattern is found in the adjacent Fraser and Babine Lake basins, although a system closer to the Cree solution seems prevalent among the southern Carrier (Goldman 1940, 1941, 1953).

In the above mode of production, with its technological and social dimensions, local owner-production groups are involved in an exchange and sharing network at three levels: one, intravillage, two, inter-village, but in the same watershed, and three, between groups in different watersheds. Thus, failures of salmon runs can be overcome at several levels.

Intravillage exchange involves different production groups within the same village, reflecting the differential productivity of micro-environments used by various households. As noted above, what are called family groups have their own fishing areas, and a norm of reciprocity, structured around clans and potlatching, would likely ensure distributions of foodstuffs within a village. However, given the limited number of sockeye salmon fishing sites, a salmon failure would likely affect the whole village. In that case, sharing between villages in the same watershed would offset local resource failures. For example, in August, 1847, Tachie Carriers came to Nescolie to see if any fish had been caught; a few days later, a number of people from





Pinchi also showed up (HBCA B.188/a/20, fo. 27d, 28). In 1814, the failure of salmon at Stuart Lake forced the Carriers there to travel to Fraser Lake to trade for salmon (Harmon 1957:173). Fraser Lake and Stuart Lake, however, both fall in the Fraser River drainage system, and were sometimes subject to common salmon failures. In that case, Fraser River drainage Carriers travelled to Babine Lake, which was more productive and was part of another drainage system, the Skeena River. For example, in 1831 the Fort St. James journal noted that "Most of the Indians having been obliged from the failure of Salmon to go to the Babines." (HBCA B.188/a/17, fo. 33d) In 1843, it was noted that "The Rapid (Grand Rapids) Indians have all gone to the Babines in quest of Salmon. What a concourse of Indians will be gathered there." (HBCA B.188/a/19, fo.96)

Salmon failures in a watershed could also be overcome by shifting to a lake which was productive in another species. For example, Cunningham Lake, or yekoh, at the head of Stuart Lake, was particularly abundant in whitefish, and a village was located at its outlet. In 1831, several Fraser Lake Indians went there in December, "it being the only place where they can get any fish to save themselves from famine." (HBCA B.188/a/17, fo.33)

Aside from the cyclical nature of sockeye salmon in the Fraser River system, other factors sometimes prevented access. For example, the August, 1885, run was a failure because high water prevented the erection of the weirs (HBCA B.188/e/8, fo. 1).

A ceremonial network joined all the villages in the region's watersheds, and it was this network, plus the system of cross-cousin marriage, that provided the framework for movements between resource



areas. Recent cultural ecological interpretations of potlatching on the Northwest Coast have emphasized its adaptive function in transferring resources from local groups with a surplus to other groups suffering shortages (Pidcocke 1965, Suttles 1968). However, as Adams (1975:95) has suggested, ecological crises do not necessarily generate potlatches. For the Carriers, the ceremonial network, which involved potlatching, maintained alliances between local production groups in different watersheds, and thus provided a means of sharing resources during times of shortages. An analysis of all the ceremonies recorded in the archival records for Fort St. James indicates that they were basically exchanges between the deneza to validate succession to titles, and that while 'common' people participated and quantities of food were served, the main function of the feasts was to maintain alliances between deneza which in turn kept intact the existing relations of production. Rank, for example, is mentioned in several accounts:

- 1829 - invitation to "principal Indians" of Stuart Lake to attend a feast (HBCA B.188/a/15, fo. 445d)
- 1829 - Indians of "no note" returned from feast; "those of more consideration have been detained for the closing ceremonies." (HBCA B.188/2/15, fo. 47)
- 1830 - "the little chief from Fraser Lake" (HBCA B.188/a/16, fo. 30d)
- 1849 - Grand Rapids Indians arrive at Fort St. James "in search of one of the principal chiefs to invite to a feast" (HBCA B.188/a/20, fo. 88d)
- 1851 - feast given by "principal men" of Necoslie. (HBCA B.188/a/20, fo. 138)

The most complete description of an actual ceremony is given by McLean, who attended one in the 1830s (1932: 156-159):

In the beginning of the winter we were invited to a feast held in honour of a great chief, who died some years before ... we directed our steps towards the "banqueting house", a large hut temporarily erected for the occasion. We found the numerous guests assembled and already seated around "the



festive board"; our place had been left vacant for us, Mr. Dease taking his seat next to the great chief, Quaw, and we, his Meewidiyazees (little chiefs), in succession. The company were disposed in two rows: the chiefs and elders being seated next to the wall, formed the outer, and the young men the inner row; an open space of about three feet in breadth intervening between them ... the relatives of the deceased acted as stewards, each of them seizing a roasted beaver, or something else, squatted himself in front of one of the guests, and presenting the meat ... desired him to help himself.

The gormandizing contest ended as it began, with songs and dances...

The affair concluded by an exchange of presents, and the party broke up.

Archival records indicate at least nineteen feasts held in the Stuart Lake region between 1828 and 1853. They involved both villagers from the immediate area, and people from adjacent watersheds. For example, "nearly all the Fond du Lac" and Necoslie Carrier attended a feast at Pinchi, May, 1828. In June, 1831, Carriers from Fraser Lake, Stuart Lake, and Fort George (on the Fraser River) assembled at Fort St. James. Babine Lake Carriers attended another feast at Fort St. James in June, 1852 (HBCA B.188/a/15, 16).

Of the nineteen ceremonies for which there are accounts in the period of 1828 to 1853, nine were held at Fort St. James, three at Pinchi, two at Tachie, one at Grand Rapids, and three at Tachick, a village south of Stuart Lake. Three were held in the spring, eight in summer, four in the fall, and four in winter.

A cultural ecological model of exchange in the Stuart Lake watershed should see a correlation between the occurrence of feasts and the dominant sockeye salmon run. Feasts could be held in the late fall, after the salmon has been processed, or through the winter and following spring, drawing on stored supplies of dried salmon. Fifteen





feasts have been described as taking place at one of the Stuart Lake villages between 1828 and 1852. Of these, only two (held in 1841 and 1849) occur in years when the sockeye salmon runs were theoretically abundant (in other words, these years fall in the 1901 dominant line). However, two other years, 1850 and 1852, which do not fall in the dominant line were productive, and feasts were held. For example, a feast was held from December 28, 1850 to January 13, 1851 at Necoslie; another at Tachie in March, 1851, and a third at Necoslie from June 10-18, 1851 (HBCA B.188/a/20, fo. 121-138). On the other hand, a feast was held in 1831, even though the salmon run had been poor (HBCA B.188/a/17, fo. 33). However, the overall impression is that a productive sockeye salmon run facilitates feasts in the late fall of that year, and over into the next spring. But no explicit statements exist in the Fort St. James journal that indicate that salmon surpluses alone facilitate feasting. As indicated earlier, small game formed an important part of the foods consumed during these ceremonies.

Carrier groups also traded with the coast. When the first Europeans arrived at the Nechako Plateau, they encountered European trade goods among the Carrier and Sekani which had been traded in from the coast (Fraser 1960:170; Harmon 1957:150; Mackenzie 1970). In 1793, one explorer, Mackenzie, encountered a Carrier male on the Fraser River, with a Bella Coola wife, who was on his way to the coast with furs for his Bella Coola brother-in-law. Goldman (1953:51) recorded that Chilcotin and Southern Carrier groups resided part of the year in Bella Coola. The confluence of the Bulkley and Skeena Rivers was a major trading centre for coastal and interior groups



(Morice 1892:120). While the production of furs likely increased the importance of interior groups for coastal entrepreneurs who acted as middlemen in the growing fur-European goods trade, the actual trading network encountered by the Europeans probably predated the European-influenced fur trade (cf. Hudson 1972). Dentalium shells, nephrite adzes, carvings, and a variety of coastal goods were exchanged for interior products such as furs and, for some hunting parties, skins (cf. Mackenzie 1970).

### Summary

The first Europeans encountered a mode of production in which hunting lands and fishing sites were controlled by clan groups, internally differentiated into title-holders and non-title-holders, and involved in exchange relations with other similar groups in adjacent watersheds. The mode of production emphasized local control of production, but allowed access to others' resources. The resource base of this mode of production was sockeye salmon which, because of its cyclical nature, precluded local group self-sufficiency. Local surpluses were distributed to other groups through sharing and the clan-potlatch system, although potlatches themselves cannot be seen solely as redistributive mechanisms. The lineal transmission of rights to resources at the production level contrasts with the model of bilateral Athapaskan groups in the Northwest Territories (Asch 1979a; Helm 1968). Because of the ways in which the means of production were controlled, the problem, for the Carriers, became one of gaining access to the resources of other watersheds, while retaining control of the resources in one's immediate area. This was achieved through restrictions at the production level and access through the clan system.



While the fur trade as set in motion by Europeans increased the importance of the control of trapping lands, the use of beaver for food and the relations of production described above make it clear that the Europeans encountered a population which had clear control of resources at the local level, and was able to utilize resources through efficient technological and social mechanisms. The problem for the Europeans was how to direct production towards items which would enable trading companies to realize profits. The first stage of this attempted redirection centres on the fur trade, or mercantile capitalism. The traditional relations of production could not contain the fur trade, and the deneza began to lose power over a segment of production as individuals traded furs for themselves. Further material changes, described in the following chapter, led to a shift from the clan-deneza-salmon complex to patrilocal groups controlling trapping territories. The references to "family trapping areas" likely deal with an emerging patrilocal structure, with the inheritance of trapping territories through patrilineal ties, thus altering the prior relations of production.

The following chapter describes the material and social changes which followed the fur trade.



## Chapter 4 Mercantile Capitalism and the Carrier Mode of Production

### Introduction

This chapter describes the impact of the fur trade on the Carrier mode of production. While the deneza controlled weir fishing, and were able to appropriate some fur production from clan members, their overall power diminished as individuals obtained credit from, and traded directly with, the trading companies. The deneza no longer controlled the sole means of production, and by the end of the nineteenth century a new form of production relations was emerging - centred on trapping groups.

European expansion into the Nechako Plateau was part of a westward inland extension of a land-based fur trade in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. After an exploratory trek by Mackenzie in 1793 to survey the fur trade potential, the Northwest Company established a series of posts, gradually extending operations up the Peace River system into the headwaters of the Fraser and Skeena Rivers. Posts were established at McLeod Lake in 1805 to attract Sekani bands which had previously traded into posts along the Peace River (Fraser 1960). Carriers from the Stuart Lake were also trading into McLeod Lake in 1805 (Fraser 1960), but several posts were located within Carrier territory in 1806 and 1807. The establishment of the McLeod Lake post resulted in the formation of a Sekani band which centred its





trading activities around the establishment, but the posts placed in Carrier territory were situated at or near Carrier fall and winter villages, obviating the need for resettlement by the Carriers. The locations of Northwest Company posts were influenced by many of the same factors affecting Carrier subsistence and settlement patterns, most noticeably the need to be adjacent to a salmon fishing place and access routes to other resource areas.

The first post placed in Carrier territory was located at the outlet of Stuart Lake in 1806, near the village of Necoslie which, in 1833, had five or six houses, each occupied by several families (McLean 1932:146). A second trading post was erected at the outlet of Fraser Lake, again near a Carrier village, Nautley. Subsequently, a building was placed at the junction of the Fraser and Nechako Rivers to attract fur production from that region.

The post at Stuart Lake, Fort St. James, became the administrative and trading centre for the district of New Caledonia, with secondary posts at McLeod Lake, Fraser Lake (Fort Fraser), Fraser River (Fort George and Fort Alexandria), Babine Lake (Fort Kilmaurs, later named Fort Babine), Bear Lake (Fort Connolly), Finlay River (Fort Grahame, but originally called Bear Lake Outpost), Stony Creek (south of the Nechako River), and other seasonal posts. Fort St. James was strategically located at a major salmon fishing place of the Carriers who occupied the outlet of the lake, and who were also the largest group in the watershed. It was also at the intersection of river routes to the Fraser River and overland trails to Fraser Lake and Babine Lake. Most of the posts were located adjacent to salmon streams, and were largely self-supporting; a supply system was established to provision



posts which lacked abundant bush resources (for example, McLeod Lake), and to transfer salmon from high to low supply areas. Fort St. James acted as the centre for trade in the Stuart Lake watershed, drawing on five villages in 1828, according to Simpson (1947:18-20); similarly, the Fraser Lake post drew on the fur production of six villages (Ibid.). Each post had its own sphere of influence or catchment area, which was maintained through credit and gifts. Lists of hunters with debts were kept by each post to prevent an individual obtaining credit at several posts. Posts were maintained seasonally in some years to obtain fur production from nomadic groups, closed down in other areas as fur production declined, or established to drive out competition.

#### The Use of Carrier Labour and Resources

The Northwest Company drew on the local indigenous labour force for the production of food and services for its posts; with a limited amount of commodities which could be brought overland to the Stuart Lake area, the trading posts could not supplant the native subsistence economy and in fact were forced to rely upon it for their own survival, a pattern which continued into the late 1800s. In 1821, the Northwest Company merged with the Hudson's Bay Company, but neither the structure of trade nor the dependence on local labour and resources changed. Strategies of the trading companies included trading salmon and other fish directly from the local Carriers in the Stuart Lake basin, establishing their own fisheries, dispersing personnel to other posts, or establishing posts in areas of high salmon productivity to take advantage of the differential productivity of various watersheds. Like the Stuart Lake Carriers, the trading companies went to Fraser Lake when Stuart Lake runs failed, or traded



salmon from the Babine Indians during low years in the Fraser River system. An example of the extensive use of local resources is indicated in the Fort St. James Journal, 1849, when, between August 11 and October 31, over 3,215 salmon were traded from Fort St. James Indians; 9,000 from Tachie; "a few canoe loads of dried salmon" from Pinchi; three boat loads from Grand Rapids; two boat loads from unidentified villages; and 459 salmon from the Hudson's Bay Company's own nets, for a total of 12,674 plus five boat loads of salmon. Out of this, 2,800 salmon were shipped to McLeod Lake (HBCA B.188/1/20).

Salmon was not the only fish traded in; 7,000 whitefish were obtained in 1811 (Harmon 1957:147), and 8,000 dry carp were traded between May 13 and 24 in 1827 (HBCA B.188/a/15, fo. 12, 13d). The extent to which trade in fish to the Hudson's Bay Company (and, earlier, the Northwest Company) represented resources which were surplus to the needs of the Carriers is unclear. Clearly, amounts of several thousand fish could be produced in years of high natural productivity, but there is no indication in the literature about the ability of lakes to sustain production for both the Indian population and the requirements of the trading companies. The lack of labour at the posts was offset by trading dried salmon, that is salmon which had already been processed. The control of fishing production enabled the Carriers to receive trade goods in return for fish and, for a time, to control the prices paid for their fish. There are examples in 1835 and 1848 of attempts by the Hudson's Bay Company to force the price down from 60 salmon per MB (Made Beaver) to 90. In 1848, the Stuart Lake Carriers withheld their salmon from trade with the company to keep a price of 60 per MB. However, much to the chagrin of the village chief, an individual broke





the strike by trading in 650 salmon, and others followed suit (HBCA B.188/a/20, fo. 58d). To reduce dependence on the fishing monopoly held by the Stuart Lake Indians in the early 1800s, the Hudson's Bay Company established a post on Babine Lake more, it appears, to trade for salmon than for fur. A transportation network with boats and carts over a portage linked Babine and Stuart Lake, which Odgen (1937:50) suggests in 1835 forced the Indians to lower their prices from 60 to 90 salmon per MB. The Hudson's Bay Company also established its own fisheries on whitefish lakes; one, for example, was started at Cunningham Lake in 1827, a lake still known for its whitefish production. But the final blow to Carrier control of production came in the 1880s, when regular paddlewheeler service up the Skeena River was inaugurated, connecting with Fort St. James by a pack trail from Hazelton, and sloops on Babine and Stuart Lakes. The irrelevance of Indian fish production to the operations of the trading companies was finalized with the completion of a transcontinental railway in 1914, which passed only fifty miles south of Fort St. James. By the end of the 1800s, the Hudson's Bay Company's extensive network of boats, pack trails, warehouses, and stores gave them freedom from Indian-controlled production and the ability to move substantial amounts of food to potential Indian consumers. Labour, however, was limited in the White communities, and the importance of Indian labour was to continue into the early 1900s.

The role of Indian labour was recognized quite early in the operations of the Hudson's Bay Company. For example, Simpson (1947:26) commented in 1828 that natives were depended on "chiefly for the means of subsistence and for various duties about the establishments." The



following entry in the Fort St. James journal in the fall of 1853 indicates the role of female labour:

The few hands now at this Post (Fort St. James) are insufficient for the duties of the fall and without the assistance of Indians we could not get through with the work. Consequently for the past days we have had the help of several Indian women to take up our Potatoes ... (HBCA B.188/a/21, fo. 73)

Morice (1904:113) quotes a letter from company offices in Victoria to Fort St. James in 1854 which also underlines dependence on Indian labour:

In your letter of the 2nd of October (1853) allusion is made to the employment of Indians to make up for the deficiency of White servants, a very proper measure, and you must provide goods for the payment of such service.

For example, the Hudson's Bay Company employed nine men in boat construction in 1892. To transport supplies, the company used two schooners, one each on Stuart and Babine Lake, the crews for which were Indian. In 1890, the schooner crews consisted of seven to nine men on Babine Lake and five men on Stuart Lake (HBC Archives B.188/a/7, fo. 15); in 1892, the crews consisted of two Indians, paid \$35 and \$30 (Ibid. B.188/a/8, fo., 14). Indian labour was also used to unload the schooners at the depots, and run the horse teams required for the portage between Babine and Stuart Lake (1897, HBC Archives B.188/a/23, fo. 25). The company report for 1891 included an expenditure of \$16.74 paid to Indians for making hay (HBC Archives B.188/a/7, fo. 10-11).

The Northwest Company and the Hudson's Bay Company both attempted to foster dependency on a particular post by groups in the vicinity, but economic hegemony was prevented by the coastal trade routes, operated by native entrepreneurs, and, after 1869, by the competition



by free traders. Transportation problems prevented the movement of large quantities of goods, especially bulky items like flour, into the area until the advent of paddlewheeler traffic on the Skeena River in the 1880s, a factor which prevented any alternative to bush foods. After the town of Quesnel was established in the 1860s as a supply depot for the Cariboo gold mines, an alternative market was opened to Carrier trappers. As a result, many of the furs taken in the Stuart Lake area in the 1880s and 1890s were traded in Quesnel.

### The Role of Credit

Credit and gifts were the primary means by which trappers were persuaded to return their furs to particular posts; debt records commence at the start of the Northwest Company's operations in the region (Fraser 1960:200). For example, in 1831, 169 hunters were on the Fort St. James' credit advance lists (Morice 1904:23). But journal entries indicate that debt was seen as necessary to divert furs from coastal traders, although a burden on post supplies.

Individual Carrier trappers were listed as "attached" to particular posts, and attempts were made to prevent attached trappers from obtaining credit at other posts. In 1826, about 500 Indian men were listed as attached to one of five posts: thirty-two Sekani men at McLeod Lake, one hundred and eight Carrier and six Sekani men at Fort St. James, one hundred and eighty-nine Carriers at Fraser Lake, one hundred and twenty-two Carrier and forty Atnah (or Shuswap) men at Alexandria, and one hundred and twenty Carrier and three Sekani trappers attached to the post on Babine Lake (HBCA B.188/a/5, fo. 145-148). At this time, only forty-four company employees were listed. The mode of trade was primarily through barter, based on the





Made Beaver (Ray 1974:61) as the unit of exchange. This changed to a cash economy after an influx of miners and free traders in the 1860s, drawn to the region by several gold strikes (Moberly 1929:118). Up until the 1860s, dry goods were mostly carried, reflecting the independence of the Carriers from store food; following the influx of miners, food became an important element of trade, although not to the Carriers until the 1860s. Morice (1904:303) and Moberly (1929:118) indicate that seventy prospectors passed through Fort St. James in the spring of 1863, a vanguard of scores more that eventually came and went.

Indian trappers were advanced credit, referred to as 'debts', 'skins' (as the debts were measured in Made Beaver, or 'skins'), or 'credit advances'. These were part of exchange relations from the start: Simon Fraser, who established the post of Fort St. James in 1806 noted on June 9, 1806, at McLeod Lake that several Carriers had come in, and:

Two of the Carriers paid 21 Skins Credit as part payment of what they had from Mr. McDougall at the Beaver River (Rocky Mountain Fort). (Fraser 1960:200)

One hundred and sixty-nine hunters were on the 'credit advance' lists at Fort St. James in 1831 (Morice 1904:23), although the amount of debt was not indicated. The set of debt accounts for 1889 lists sixty-eight male names and a general category of "women". The total debt listed amounted to 4214  $\frac{3}{4}$  Made Beaver, and ranged from  $\frac{1}{2}$  Made Beaver to 228  $\frac{1}{4}$  Made Beaver.

The following transaction indicated in the Fort St. James journal, September 28, 1831 (HBCA B.188/a/17, fo. 19d) seems typical: Two Pinchi Indians brought in a quantity of furs, which were used to close





their previous debts, and in return received advances of 15 MB and 18 MB, respectively, plus a small quantity of ammunition and tobacco, the latter being used regularly as a gift, particularly at Christmas, when Carrier trappers came into the post at Fort St. James. Other gratuities included clothing and small trade goods. For example, the following note was recorded in the Fort St. James journal in 1840 (HBCA B.188/a/19, fo. 4):

Hoolson Old Quas Brother was this day considerably disappointed as he expected to receive his Brother's annual clouthing (sic) but before I can grant him this he must prove himself worthy of it all ... neither his hunt or his conduct this year entitles him to it because he has now become the chief of the Nashalian I made him a present of a ... moose skin this can do no harm.

Individuals felt by the trading company to have some influence over production levels of their fellow villagers were sometimes brought on to the company payroll. For example, correspondence from Stuart Lake to Fraser Lake in 1887 included the following note:

I had a satisfactory interview with the Fraser Lake Chief last evening, he possesses some influence over the Indians, and as it is better to have such a man with us rather than against us, under existing circumstances, you will please retain him his present position as cattle herder, House Servant, and Interpreter. During Winter he might be encouraged to devote all his spare time to Trapping Foxes, etc., in the neighbourhood. (HBCA B.188/b/10, fo. 23)

In his recent study of Churchill, Manitoba, Elias (1975:8) presents credit advances, or debt, as an example of the means by which Indian trappers were brought under the control of the trading companies. However, in the Stuart Lake area, the options for obtaining trade goods elsewhere and the ability to live off bush resources ameliorated such potentialities. The early independence of the Carriers is partly reflected in the descriptions provided by company personnel, who, unable to substantially redirect subsistence pro-



duction into trapping, resorted to calling the Carriers lazy:

The Indians of this place are naturally lazy. I am at my wits end to fall upon a method to make them work. (Fraser, describing the Carriers of Nautley, or Fraser Lake, in 1806 (Fraser 1960:243))

They from their infancy get into the habit of laziness which they cannot get over and to the easy means they have of providing themselves with their wants must be attributed the many vices they have imbibed. Indeed in my opinion they are the most debased set I have known and without exception they are all thieves. (McDougall, commenting on the Carriers in general in 1824 (HBCA B.188/a/2, fo. 57d))

### The Impact of Mercantile Capitalism on the Carrier Mode of Production

Thus, the first articulation of the modes of production took place at the trade level, with Indian bush resources (food, fur) and labour exchanged for European commodities. Trade goods were then redistributed in the community by 'trading chiefs' or 'trading captains'. However, Carrier use of European goods was minimal.

Attempts to expand trade were also inhibited by dependency on salmon supplies and periodic fluctuations in fur bearing animals, the most important of which was beaver. The critical period for Carrier involvement in trapping occurred in the early 1900s, the outcome of specific historical circumstances which altered the productivity of the natural resource base, a point which is discussed in greater detail below. In the early stages of capitalist expansion into the region, the traders were able to take advantage of seasonally available resources obtained by a resident native population which possessed the means of production necessary to meet the demands of the operations of the trading companies. But there were limits. For example, as salmon runs to Stuart Lake were only abundant once every four years, the trading companies adapted to differential stream productivity by tapping the resources of other watersheds which had



different races of salmon with a different cycle. Expanded commodity production was difficult until supply routes were shortened; without an assured supply, store food could not replace subsistence production as the primary source of sustenance. Even with the improved supply system initiated in the late 1800s, bush resources continued to play an important role in the Carrier economy.

With the bush economy relatively intact, and the Carriers operating as petty commodity producers, controlling their own means of production, the Tl'azt'enne were able to maintain an existence independent of mercantile capitalism. This position was due to both the nature of the resource base available to the Carriers, and that the types of tools brought in by the fur traders were not much in demand. European technology was not as efficient as some Carrier technology, especially for fishing, although, for example, steel traps were increasingly used for trapping after their introduction in the 1830s (McLean 1932:174). Repeated references have already been made to both the Carriers' lack of interest in consuming European goods, and their ability to obtain such items from coastal traders or any one of a number of towns which had grown up to service the gold rushes. However, this does not mean that all Carrier local groups remained unaffected by the penetration of mercantile capitalism. By 1890, flour and other provisions had partly replaced salmon; Fraser River drainage Carrier groups apparently sought store food to off-set low salmon productivity. For example, the HBC reported a greater consumption of imported provisions following the failure of salmon fisheries at Stuart and Fraser lakes in 1888





(HBCA B.188/b/12,. fo. 95). The problem was alleviated a little by a small supply of salmon obtained from Babine Lake and provisions from the post at Fort George, but Stuart Lake, Fraser Lake, and Stony Creek (south of Stuart Lake) were short an estimated 6563 kg of flour (HBCA B.188/b/12, fo. 26).

The Hudson's Bay Company was reporting in 1890 that food items were an essential part of the trade:

The great quantity of flour and other provisions required for the trade of this District is the chief cause of the unprofitableness of the trade. The trouble is that the Indians cannot do without the provisions and sugar, the latter being the most profitable. (HBCA B.188/b/15, fo. 291)

Some groups had trapped out their territories by this time. For example, the Stony Creek Indians were described in the following terms:

These Indians are so poor and there (sic) country so cleaned out that they cannot pay their debts. I have given strict orders that no more credit shall be given at this post. (HBCA B.188/b/15, fo. 285)

In other words, the Stony Creek Carriers had become marginal to the fur trade. On the other hand, the Fort St. James Report for 1891 reported: "The Indians are Porteurs, a branch of the Tinne. They are fairly well off. Salmon are abundant and a stock is usually secured for winter use. Difficult to deal with." (HBCA B.188/e/7, fo. 16)

It appears that by this time (1890), some groups had lost their utility to the fur trading companies, and were considered a burden. But also by this time, the Hudson's Bay Company was integrated into the exchange system, and its ability to 'produce' flour and other commodities was the equivalent of another resource. Correspondence in the 1890s indicates the growing concern by the Hudson's Bay Company over its "Relief to Starving Indians Account" and the realization that



a discontinuation of the debt system would simply deflect furs to other markets (cf. HBCA B.188/b/15, fo. 283, 341).

The resource base for the Stuart Lake groups was fairly intact even in this period, although changes discussed in the next chapter were altering the situation. Trapping and working in mines (1890, HBCA B.188/b/15, fo. 284) provided options in the late 1800s. Morice's (1910:427) description of the seasonal round of activities circa 1900 in the Stuart Lake area indicates the extent to which trapping had been incorporated into the economic base. The subsistence cycle had two focal points: fishing and trapping. Salmon were taken in the fall, and trout in October and November. Trapping was carried out along with trout fishing, and after the smaller lakes froze over, the trappers returned to Fort St. James to dispose of their furs. After equipping themselves with snowshoes, the trappers headed back out from November through to January or February. Then, in February, what Morice calls the great winter hunt began, lasting until May (Morice 1910:427, passim).

The most important changes took place at the level of relations of production. While the economic base and technology remained reasonably intact, the control of resource areas by deneza was diminished.

The debt system encouraged production by individuals, but pressures to alter the nineteenth century mode of production also came from the priests, and the provincial government initiated the registration of traplines to individuals. A growing dependence on, and incorporation into, the expanding capitalist economy and state, came from identifiable historical events, which left the Carriers with fewer options. Increased dependence on commodity production resulted



from diminished bush resources, epidemics, and other factors - but not from a direct response to the mere availability of western technology, as Murphy and Steward (1956) suggest.

The economic penetration of the Nechako Plateau was accompanied by diseases which, along with cyclical fluctuations of the major resources, created problems in reproducing the traditional mode of production. Much to the chagrin of the Hudson's Bay Company, disease also interfered with trapping. For example, the Fort St. James journal reported the following:

- 1832 - Several Nautley Indians died of starvation.
- 1842 - 63 members of the Mountain Party of Sekani, trading in to McLeod Lake Post, starved to death.
- 1849 - measles raging at all the villages (HBCA B.188/a/20, fos. 81d - 83d).
- 1850 - At McLeod Lake, few have survived the great sickness and starvation during the winter (HBCA B.188/a/20, fo. 104d).

The winter of 1887-1888 was critical; measles spread through the plateau, killing ten Indians at Fort George, twenty-nine at Babine Lake, three at Stony Creek, and more at Fraser Lake and Quesnel. The epidemic apparently started in 1887 on the Skeena River, and by spring, 1888, broke out at Grand Rapids, Portage, Tachie, Pinchi, and Fort St. James, killing an unreported number of adults and children (HBCA B.188/b/11). Whooping cough broke out at Pinchi in 1892, and three years later, "la grippe" (influenza) cause "quite a number of deaths" at Fraser Lake and Stony Creek.

Morice (1906:257) recorded that an earlier measles epidemic devastated the whole district in 1850, followed in 1862 by small pox which spread from the coast through the Chilcotins to the Carrier groups





south of Fraser Lake - where it killed the "immense majority of the Indians." (Morice 1906:307-308) In an attempt to stop the 1862 smallpox, the Hudson's Bay Company vaccinated the Carriers around Fraser and Stuart Lake (Morice 1906:308). An earlier smallpox epidemic, in 1838, had apparently wiped out all the Carriers south of the Bulkley River (Jenness 1943:475).

Although often difficult to quantify, the last half of the nineteenth century was a traumatic period for the Carriers. A synopsis of the transformation of the people and the region can be found in the Hudson's Bay Company report for the year 1888, in which it was pointed out that low fur returns resulted from:

1. Scarcity of periodical fur-bearing animals.
  2. Unprecedented mildness of the winter of 1887-1888.
  3. Extraordinary brevity of the winter, which curtailed the hunting time.
  4. A great deal of sickness.
  5. The demise of a number of excellent fur hunters.
  6. Starvation among the Indians.
  7. Failure of salmon fisheries.
  8. Absence of rabbits and other food animals.
- (HBCA B.188/b/14, fo. 146)

Tl'azt'enne oral tradition refers to the movement of Babine people, especially women, to Stuart Lake because of starvation. Some of these Babine women married Tl'azt'enne males who are remembered as apical ancestors (who, on the basis of genealogical reconstructions, likely lived in the 1880s). Thus, the events of 1887-1888 served to force a movement of Carrier people throughout the region - movements which are recalled by the Tl'azt'enne.

The epidemic best remembered by older Tl'azt'enne came in 1918, when influenza struck the area. A local newspaper account at that time reported forty-two Indian deaths at Stony Creek, forty-six at Prince George, and over seventy at Stuart Lake (Vanderhoof Herald,





November 9, November 30, 1918). According to the reports:

Whole families have been wiped out. Many who were out trapping having been picked up in the bush dead. Search parties are now out looking for missing relatives.  
(Vanderhoof Herald, November 30, 1918; also see Cronin 1960:195)

The Tl'azt'enne also indicated that many people died in 1918, and most of them out on the traplines. Genealogies indicate substantial family recombinations as orphaned children were raised by grandparents and other relatives. Because of the loss of parents, and the early age at which older Tl'azt'enne today were put into homes of relatives, genealogical reconstruction beyond 1918 is difficult. For example, one man in his sixties who was born in February, 1917, lost both of his parents in November, 1918 as they were coming down the lake. He was then raised by the husband of his mother's sister.

Other epidemics occurred in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but the most debilitating ones seem to have been those of 1887-1888 and 1918. Their impact was magnified by the shortage of salmon in 1887 and the collapse (described in the following chapter) of the sockeye fisheries in Stuart Lake five years prior to the influenza epidemic. The maintenance of prior relations of production must have been difficult, if not impossible under these circumstances, particularly since the resident Oblate priest, Morice, was actively working to alter the transmission of traplines from the deneza ('clan chief', or 'noble') to male heads of families (cf. Morice 1892:115). In other words, both the material and demographic underpinnings of the mode of production operative in the early 1800s were severely strained. The situation became even more attenuated after 1900.



### Summary

The role of the Carriers during the phase in which mercantile capitalism was dominant in the interior of British Columbia was producers of furs and consumers of imported commodities. To create and maintain this role, the traders attempted to control fur production by tying trappers to particular posts through credit (debt), gifts, and the control of markets. However, the Carriers were able to remain independent of both the need for trapping and the goods at the posts because of the dependence by the traders on the Carriers for fish and labour, and the existence of alternative markets for furs. While trapping was used as a means of obtaining trade goods, it was not a necessary part of social reproduction until other resource use options had diminished. The collapse of the sockeye salmon fisheries after the turn of the century necessitated an expansion of trapping, but that event had nothing to do with the operations of the fur trading companies. However, there were some identifiable changes occurring at the material and social levels of Carrier culture.

Trapping in the winter replaced, in part, the hunting of beaver and bear in the summer for food. This seasonal shift was accompanied by the incorporation of steel traps for trapping. However, fur bearing animals were still obtained using traditional traps and snares. Thus, the fur trade itself did little to change the means of production.

While the Carriers of the Stuart Lake area maintained a stable level of fur production, other villages to the south depleted their territories of fur bearing animals prior to 1900, and began to depend more on food supplies shipped in by the Hudson's Bay Company.



However, because of the extensive nature of the distribution and supply routes, the Hudson's Bay Company was unable to provide food-stuffs in sufficient quantities to support a large indigenous trapping population.

For most of the fur trade period, the production of furs seems to have continued to rely on traditional indigenous technology for most of the nineteenth century, with a gradual incorporation of imported material. In other words, the Carriers did not abandon their means of production and substitute trade goods.

Changes in production relations were more complex. It appears that in the earlier years of the fur trade, the power of the deneza may have increased, due to his position of control over production on clan lands. However, the extension of credit to all trappers, regardless of their position in the Carrier social structure, meant that the means of trapping production became available to adults regardless of their rank. The substantive base of the power of the deneza diminished as individuals traded directly with the posts. With the demise of the deneza, and along with it the notion of clan lands, a new form of land tenure began to emerge in the late 1800s, based on patrilineal ties. The formal registration of traplines, carried out in the 1920s and 1930s formalized a system in which the deneza had no control over lands, and traplines were transmitted directly between males in the same family group, laying the foundations for patrilineal groups.

The expansion of mercantile capitalism by itself simply added another resource to the Carriers' inventory. The fur trade did not create dependence on imported commodities, nor lead to the dissolution





of exchanges within the Carrier villages. It did, however, create an outlet for production outside of the control of the deneza.

As the region gradually became incorporated into the national economy as a resource hinterland for resources other than furs, the impacts on Carrier economic and social institutions increased, and wage labour and trapping assumed more importance. These factors are discussed in the following chapter.



## Chapter 5 Internal Colonialism and Industrial Capitalism

### Introduction

The transformation of Carrier relations of production started during the fur trade era was accelerated in the early twentieth century. As described in this chapter, material forces of a variety of types undermined the power of the deneza, trapping companies controlled trapping territories, and wage labour became part of the Carrier economic base.

The twentieth century ushered in a new era in the Nechako Plateau; church, state, and industry combined to alienate the Tl'azt'enne from their means of material and cultural reproduction. The salmon component of the bush economy collapsed, land was opened up for settlement, Indian agencies and reserves were established, and wage labour became a necessary part of making a living. The former staple, fur, was replaced by other staples, notably timber and minerals, as the region was incorporated into an expanding industrial economy. The outcome was the irrelevance of Indian labour and resources to industrial capitalism. However, in the period from about 1900 to 1960, Indian labour retained some importance in the Stuart Lake area.

The Nechako Plateau was transformed economically and politically after about 1900, and the Tl'azt'enne were struck by both. Economically, the region became integrated into an expanding industrial



capitalism, which replaced mercantile interests. Politically, both the Federal Government of Canada and the Provincial Government of British Columbia extended their administrative control over both the land and its people. As a result, the Tl'azt'enne lost ultimate control over the watersheds within which the bush economy operated. The following notes outline the transformation of the Nechako Plateau, and the reordering of Tl'azt'enne society.

#### Changes in the Traditional Resource Base

The most important event in the early 1900s which forced the Carriers into greater dependence on commodity production was the virtual collapse of the sockeye fishing component of the bush economy. Direct government intervention and fortuitous actions beyond the control of the local population contributed to a situation whereby the Tl'azt'enne and other Carriers of the Fraser River system lost the mainstay of the subsistence economy. The result was increased participation in trapping, and the emergence of domestic production units. This accelerated the decline of deneza power.

It will be recalled that the characteristics of sockeye in the Fraser River system created a cycle wherein runs were dominant, or abundant, once every four years. With this four year cycle, dominant runs occurred in 1901, 1905, 1909, and 1913, and so on, in the Stuart Lake basin. In Fraser Lake, dominant runs occurred every four years from 1902, giving abundant production potential in 1902, 1906, 1910, 1914, and so on. It was suggested that the unsynchronized dominant runs in adjacent watersheds provided a means of overcoming local resource shortages, and local production groups were linked in an affinal and clan exchange network which facilitated the transfer of



resources from areas of high productivity to low areas. While the HBC Archives indicate a decrease in salmon being obtained in the late 1800s and early 1900s, the key resource of the Tl'azt'enne mode of production remained sockeye salmon. In the fall of 1913, the Tl'azt'enne had every expectation of obtaining a sizeable number of salmon to put up for the winter. But two events changed that.

Under apparent pressure to eliminate interior salmon fishing by Indian groups, the federal Department of Marine and Fisheries moved to end the use of fish weirs and traps, particularly in the major spawning lakes of the Skeena and Fraser River systems - Babine Lake, and Stuart and Fraser Lakes, respectively. In 1905 and 1906, a fisheries officer destroyed the weirs on Babine Lake (Fisheries Inspectors Reports-British Columbia, Marine and Fisheries 1906:206-211). His report states:

On this trip six barricades have been destroyed, the Indians at fishing stations on the Skeena and in the upper country have had the fishery laws explained to them, one place has been exempted from fishing, yet it will not amount to much unless there are guardians appointed to enforce the regulations, and if this is not done the Indians will surely put in their barricades next year as usual.

The weirs did go in the following year, and again were forcibly removed and several Indians arrested. Several newspapers in the province portrayed an Indian uprising, and called for a show of force. For example, the Vancouver Daily Province ran stories in August, 1906, claiming "Babine Indians Stand Off Guardians", and "Babine Indians in Open Revolt." A compromise was eventually reached whereby the Indians received nets in lieu of their weirs (Coccola, in Missions des Oblates 1906). The impact on Babine social organization has been described by Hackler (1956); to the Tl'azt'enne, and other Carriers in the Fraser





River system, the elimination of weirs in the Babine Lake basin meant the virtual cessation of trade, and the end of the use of Babine Lake surplus fish production to offset fluctuations in their own system.

In 1911, the federal government turned its attention to the Fraser River system. Agreements were reached with the Carriers of Stuart and Fraser Lakes to dismantle their weirs in return for nets to be given to each family, plus farming implements, a school, and protection of fishing stations (cf. Lane 1978). Although the agreements were apparently never ratified by Ottawa, the weirs came down and nets were sent. Necoslie received thirty-five nets; Pinchi, eight; Tachie, ten; and Portage, seven - in theory, one for each family (Lane 1978:27-28).

Through direct government intervention, the most effective means of fishing technology under deneza control had been eliminated, and the collective labour required to erect and maintain the weirs replaced by family-owned means of fishing production. As well as changing the social relations (in that families now were capable of domestic production without using clan means of production), the pattern of fishing changed. Fishing now became dependent on other tools, most notably boats, and weather conditions became a more important factor in fishing. The technology was somewhat more active now, in that one had to actually go out and set a net off shore. But during the present research period, several fishing days were lost because of storms or boat troubles.

The next phase in the dissolution of the sockeye fishing component of the subsistence economy came two years later. Debris dumped by a railway into the Fraser River at Hell's Gate, about 200 kilometres from the city of Vancouver, created an almost impassible barrier for



migrating salmon. Salmon runs migrating in July, August, and early September suffered great - and in some case, irreversible - losses in 1913. 1913, part of the 1901 'line', or cycle of dominance, was a bonanza year for the commercial fishermen in the Vancouver area. A record catch of 31 million sockeye obtained then has never been surpassed, but the survivors of commercial fishing never got past Hell's Gate. For the Tl'azt'enne, 1913 was a disaster and not, as they would have expected, a productive run. To cope with this loss, Stuart Lake Carriers shifted to Babine Lake to fish, expanding a pattern that apparently had started a few years previously.

The first Marine and Fisheries report placing Stuart Lake Indians fishing on Babine Lake (as opposed to trading salmon from the Babine Carriers) is 1908, when eighteen families fished at the head of the lake. These families represented about one-third of all the families located in the Stuart Lake watershed. In 1909, only two Stuart Lake families were reported on Babine Lake. As 1909 is also on the 1913 'line', sufficient salmon supplies were likely available in Stuart Lake itself. The lightest sockeye run in history was reported in 1911 for Fraser and Stuart Lakes - the year the agreement to remove the weirs was signed - and it was reported that "The Stuart Lake Indians came over to this creek (at the head of Babine Lake) and procured their winter supply." (Marine and Fisheries, Annual Report for 1911, p. 11) Some also returned in 1912, but the fishing at the head of Babine Lake was poor. The next year, 1913, is the most important. The following two observations made at the time sum up the dilemma which faced the Tl'azt'enne:

The Indians on Stuart Lake had made great preparation for a good catch, since this was the year of the big run on the



Fraser River. Owing to the blocking of the Fraser, however, no sockeye had reached Stuart Lake, and the Indians being disappointed had come to Fifteen-Mile Creek (on Babine Lake) ... to ensure getting their winter's supply. (Report, Commissioner for Fisheries for 1914, Marine and Fisheries, p. N39)

From Fort St. James it was reported that:

The run of sockeye this year was only one-twentieth of that of former big years. Very few sockeye reached here, while in former big years the tributaries of Stuart Lake in this vicinity literally were massed with them. While the comparatively small run was on here last September (1913), the Indians here (Stuart Lake) and on Tremblay Lake (Trembleur Lake) and Tatla Lake (Takla Lake) caught enough salmon to eat in a fresh state, but not enough to provide for their winter's consumption. (Ibid.: 1913:R34)

In 1914, thirty families on Stuart Lake obtained a total of only 500 sockeye, and those on Fraser Lake, 390. As one observer characterized the situation: "The Stuart Lake people came over here (Babine Lake) for their supply for food purposes, there being no fish in their own lake." (Ibid.: 1914) In 1915, an estimated maximum of twenty salmon were obtained in all of the Stuart Lake system, causing a shift to Babine Lake by "many Indians from Trembleur and from the villages at the upper end of Stuart Lake." (Ibid.: 1915) In 1916, even the Babine Lake runs failed, compounding the shortage (1888 is the only other year in which a similar failure is reported for Babine Lake (HBCA B.188/b/12, fo. 95)).

The critical position of the Fraser River drainage Carrier is evident in submissions to a Royal Commission for Indian Affairs in British Columbia, which met Fraser Lake Carriers in 1915. For example, the chief of the Fort Fraser Band told the commission:

Since the use of the barricade had been prohibited these Indians (Fraser Lake) could not get sufficient salmon for their requirements; they had not enough during the past two years. The year before last he (the Chief) has secured only five salmon, and last year he had had only 25 salmon for the







winter supply. The Indians were now using nets supplied them by the Government; all the people were similarly situated as to the shortage of salmon for winter food...

In the olden days there had been many salmon... in some years 1500, or 2000 or even more were secured. Now there were practically no fish. The canneries near the mouth of the Fraser were what prevented the fish coming up; before these canneries were established there had been an abundance of salmon for the supply of the Indians of this country. (Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia, 1913-1916, Evidence presented at hearings. B.C. Provincial Archives)

Other speakers told the commission of useless nets and the virtual extinction of beaver by non-Indian trappers (Ibid.).

From a position in the nineteenth century where Carriers on Fraser and Stuart Lakes had been able to trade thousands of salmon to the Hudson's Bay Company, and overcome local resource fluctuations through a structured exchange system, they were now in a crisis. While fish ladders, or structures which facilitated the up-stream passage of fish, were constructed at Hell's Gate in the late 1940s and early 1950s, for the first half of the twentieth century the Carriers had to adapt to the loss of a staple food source.

Adaptations to this situation took several forms. The use of other resources intensified - moose, for example, became a staple part of the diet, and other lake fish assumed a greater role. Moose began to migrate into the Nechako Plateau in the early 1900s, and quickly became a key part of the bush economy. With the weirs banned, the clan-based production relations were rendered somewhat obsolete, and local groups moved seasonally to other watersheds to produce, not trade, resources. The annual shift from Stuart Lake to Babine is a good example of this. The economy of the region was changing rapidly in the early 1900s, and seasonal wage labour represented an



alternative for some, particularly in the logging and tourist industries. But most importantly for the period after the collapse of the salmon fisheries, fur prices climbed substantially, and trapping became a viable seasonal occupation for the first time in 100 years. However, the collapse of the salmon fisheries was only one facet of the transformation of the Nechako Plateau, and its incorporation into industrial capitalism. Before looking at how individual Carriers dealt with their altered state, the total context of the political economy of the region must be understood, as choices were increasingly circumscribed by political, theological, and economic forces which together (although not necessarily acting in concert) were moving towards changing the social and material basis of Tl'azt'enne society. But at no time did any Tl'azt'enne suggest that they could have lived entirely from wages or trapping in the period from 1920 to 1960.

Around the turn of the century, Canada and British Columbia commenced a political and administrative penetration of resource hinterlands. This process of internal colonialism changed the indigenous culture and opened the hinterlands up for agrarian and industrial expansion. The main agents of these changes were federal and provincial governments and the Catholic church.

### Missionaries

Members of the Order of Mary Immaculate (O.M.I.), or Oblates, extended their operations to the interior of British Columbia in the mid 1800s. Mainly French-speaking at first, their goals were to proselytise the indigenous population, and replace aspects of the traditional Indian culture which they found unacceptable. Their



method was one of direct intervention, establishing missions, setting up a quasi-military structure (called the Durieu system) in each village, and creating residential schools to effectively intervene in the transmission of the indigenous culture. One of the most ardent Oblate priests at this task was Father Adrian Morice. Stationed at Fort St. James between 1885 and 1904, Morice worked to transform Carrier culture and society at the same time he was writing ethnographic and linguistic articles and books on the Carriers (cf. Morice in the bibliography).

Oblates first visited Stuart Lake in 1842, and then again in 1845, 1846-47, 1868, 1869, and 1870. All of these visits were of short duration, but a formal mission was established in 1873 on pre-empted land adjacent to the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort St. James. The mission, built using Indian labour (Lejacq, in Missions des Oblates 1880:71), became the ceremonial and administrative centre for the Oblate operations. Analagous to the Hudson's Bay Company, the Oblates built smaller, satellite churches in many of the outlying Indian villages which were visited on a once or twice-yearly basis by the priest. As well as including a church and priest's quarters, the mission centre attracted Carrier residents. By 1878, the mission priest reported that a village of twenty houses had developed there, replacing the former, traditional Necoslie Carrier village at the outlet of the lake: "Tous les sauvages ont laissé leur village pour venir se fixer à côté de nous; ils ont bâti de nouvelles maisons." (Missions des Oblates 1880:70) However, the village's location on land which the church pre-empted meant that it was not a reserve.





Today, there are no Indian houses at the mission, the residents having returned to the former village, which is on reserve land.

Four major ceremonies were held each year at the mission, attracting Carriers from the Stuart Lake watershed - Easter, Christmas, All Saints Day (November 1), and the first week of June. The first resident priest described the role of the mission in 1878 (Missions des Oblates 1880:69-70):

Quatre fois par an, nous avons des réunions à la mission; elles ont lieu pendant la semaine sainte, la première semaine du mois du juin, la semaine qui précède la Toussaint et depuis le quatrième dimanche de l'Avent jusqu'après le premier jour de l'an. A ces réunions doivent assister tous les sauvages du lac Stuart, c'est-à dire Nakazlé, Pinchy, Tachy, et Grand-Rapide; ils ont au nombre de deux cents, presque tous baptisés. La reunion de Noël est une réunion générale; tous les sauvages du district y sont invités, mais tous ne peuvent répondre à la convocation. La distance, le froid, les difficultés de la route sont pour plusieurs de légitimes raisons d'excuse. Néanmoins, nous avons toujours de six cents à huit cents sauvages; tous les villages du district sont représentés; ceux qui ne peuvent assister à la réunion de Noël viendront plus tard.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Translated as:

Four times a year we have reunions at the mission; they are held during Easter, the first week of June, the week before All Saint's Day, and after the fourth Sunday of Advent just after the first day of the year. Attending these reunions are the Indians of Stuart Lake: Nakazle, Pinchy, Tachy, and Grand Rapids. They number about 200, almost all baptized. Christmas is a general reunion; all of the Indians of the district are invited, but not all can attend because of the distance, cold, and the difficulty of travel. However, we always have 600-800 Indians, with representatives from all the villages of the district. Those not able to present themselves at Christmas come later.





At certain times, the interests of the Hudson's Bay Company and the Oblates merged. For example, the same services which brought in people from the outlying villages (weather conditions permitting) facilitated trading for furs. The Fort St. James journal for October, 1897, noted:

October 27, 1897: A good many Indians in from all quarters to attend the celebration of All Saints Day and traded a good deal of fur from them.

October 30, 1897: All the Indians in the neighbourhood and the Fort on 1st. A good deal of fur coming in. (HBCA B.188/a/23, fo. 23d)

The Durieu system was perhaps the most direct example of attempts to alter Indian culture and society. The system, named after an Oblate bishop, Durieu, and tried in a Sechelt Indian village on the coast (Lamert 1954; Duff 1964), created in each village an administrative unit to act on behalf of the priest. Morice (1906:337) reported that under this system, a chief, captain, and watchmen had been appointed in each of the Carrier villages in 1868. However, until the permanent mission was established in 1873, it is not likely that the system had much impact. The duties of each of the appointed officers are described by Morice (1930:54, note 8):

The chief orders, and in a vague way replaces the priest in his absence, giving, just out of the local church, short and sometimes eloquent exhortations in confirmation of what the missionary may have said inside, or taking his place, always at the door of the sacred edifice on the Sundays when he is not there; the captains are the ministers of the whip, which they administer to those who ask for it or are condemned to receive it by the chief acting as lay magistrate, while the watchman's role is to conform to the function expressed by their name, and the soldiers act as policemen or constables, fetching the accused to the chief and council and keeping watch over the condemned culprits, that is filling towards them the part of jailers.



The village chief was given a special position. As the Stuart Lake priest wrote to his superior in 1878 (Missions des Oblates 1880: 60): "We give to each village chief a calendar marking priest's visits. With the aid of signs, they know days of abstinence and obligatory services." Elderly Tl'azt'enne recall the effectiveness of the system, and the power of the "church chief", or liglis-dayi, which extended to jailing those convicted of transgressions.

Having set up an administrative framework within the Carrier villages, the Oblates moved to alter the culture, and eliminate those elements which they found counterproductive to their goals. Potlatching, especially, was singled out. The same priests who established the Durieu system in the Carrier villages in 1868 also abolished polygyny, gambling, conjuring, and drinking (Morice 1906:338). Their initial success remains unknown, but some results were achieved in later years. Morice (1930:115-116) opposed potlatching, claiming that it "borders on idolatry" and argued that its "ritual feasts, or distributions, immensely impoverish those who give them and deprive their families of legitimated due." Morice (1930:16) also claimed that by 1901 only the Bulkley River Carriers had "not yet yielded" to his "pressing advice." However, he also notes (Ibid.:117-118) that at one of the villages of the above, ceremonial paraphernalia were burned in 1901. Jenness (1943:513), who produced a detailed ethnographic account of the Bulkley River Carriers, wrote that the same villagers burned their ceremonial regalia in 1913, under prompting by their priests. Morice, and his predecessors, claim to have been successful in eliminating polygyny and restructuring marriage rules so that clan exogamy was replaced by an attempt to find a spouse outside of a



'cousin group'. Under the clan system, cross-cousins were considered potential spouses. However, the marriage records for Stuart Lake, dating to 1873, indicate a number of dispensations granted for cousin marriages, as one would expect in such a small population. As Asch (1980) and Helm (1960) indicate, the issue of Athapaskan marriage rules and kinship terms is complex and changes cannot be attributed solely to post-contact influences.

Morice actively worked to alter existing relations of production wherein land, especially trapping territory, was controlled by clan leaders, or deneza. By the 1890s, Morice (1892:115, 1930: 115-116) indicated that landed estates had been parcelled out to heads of families, effectively removing the land from clan control. Another Oblate priest assigned to the region after Morice continued to pressure for family, not clan, control of land. His accounts, though, indicate that the clan system still operated in the minds of some Carriers. For example, he noted (Coccola 1924:67):

One of the great questions arising at almost every meeting was that of the hunting-grounds difficulty. A hunter, dying and leaving children would leave his hunting grounds to the children but when there were many children, and they had nothing to show in writing, the problem was to show who was to have the ground where the most game was to be found.

Coccola (Ibid.) also noted that claims to the hunting ground were made by a person who had "caused a monument to be erected over the grave of the deceased," and that "The more elaborate the posts were the larger share in the grounds he would claim." It was further noted that the claim might be made a few years after the death, and those who had erected the mortuary pole would then set their traps on the deceased's land.





What Coccola outlined for the period 1906-1910 is the conflict between filial and matrilineal transmission of property. Mortuary poles were erected by members of the clan of the deceased to legitimize their claims based on matrilineal descent. In response to this, Coccola (1924:68) stated that priests attempted to end the erection of such posts and what they called the "exploitation of deceased's relatives." No other similar accounts exist in the literature, and it appears that by the early 1900s, the deneza's power had largely diminished.

Another major thrust by the Oblates into Carrier culture came with the establishment of schools. Under agreements with the Indian Affairs Branch, the Oblates were supported in setting up schools for Catholic Indians. A boys' residential school opened in Williams Lake, several hundred kilometres south of Stuart Lake, in 1873, followed by a girls' school in 1876. However, only one Tl'azt'en, a lady now in her nineties, attended that distant school. The first school in the Stuart Lake watershed opened in 1914 at Fort St. James - a day school near the mission (Indian Affairs Branch Report for 1915, p. 141). Enrolment, though, was low. The Indian Agent reported that of an estimated 282 children of school age in the area, only fifty-three were enrolled, and of that number, only twenty-three actually attended (Indian Affairs Branch Report for 1916, p. 180). Informants indicated that at that time, parents could not afford to move to Fort St. James to allow their children to attend a day school. This is corroborated by one of the conditions under which the Stuart Lake Carriers were prepared to discuss removing their fish weirs. In a statement conveyed to the federal government by the district priest, the Stuart



Lake people called for a residential school in 1911:

That the Government will consent to open and provide a boarding school for their children, boys and girls, where at least their offspring would be free from starvation, and let parents free to go to their trappings as far as game can be found, which they could not do if all the family had to be packed or follow. (Letter from Father Coccola to H.P. Horan, February 11, 1911; quoted in Lane (1978:9))

The above statement indicates that the Stuart Lake Carriers were apprehensive about their economic future, and that one way of coping with the situation was to decrease the number of unproductive members of local groups. However, as noted above, the first school was a day school, and therefore of limited use to the Carriers. The day school lasted only a few years, though, and a residential school was built in 1922 on the south shore of Fraser Lake. Run by the Oblate Fathers and Sisters of the Child Jesus, it accommodated between 150 and 200 children, finally closing down in the early 1970s.

The school, as recalled by Tl'azt'enne, changed Carrier culture. Each child contributed to the economic functioning of the school by cutting firewood, planting gardens, carrying out domestic chores, and so on. The use of an Indian language was prohibited, and children were punished for speaking it (cf. Ashworth 1979 for a general account of Indian schools in British Columbia). Because of the distances involved, children from remote communities returned home only for a short period in the summer. At age sixteen, one had to leave the school, due, according to the Tl'azt'enne, to the withdrawal of government funding to the school when a child reached that age. Tl'azt'enne recall returning home at age sixteen with little knowledge of either their parents or bush production skills, which had to be relearned.



While on one hand the residential schools appropriated the right of the community to educate its children, it also became a means for the economic survival of those communities. Unproductive members were removed, and adult production groups retained their mobility. The pattern began to change, though, with the construction of 'day schools', that is, schools which do not provide residential accommodation.

Day schools opened in 1949 at Stony Creek and Fort St. James, at Tachie in 1963, and Portage in 1976. As a result, the school age population has had to be reintegrated into the communities. But the marginality of the Carriers with respect to living off the land has diminished, and adult production groups have retained their mobility by leaving school age children with relatives for the duration of hunting and trapping trips. Educational payments to support students also provide income to households.

The paradox of Oblate intervention in Carrier culture and society is that it both undermined and perpetuated it. The strategies which the adult, or productive segment of the Carrier population, adopted in order to survive in the 1920s and 1930s were in part only possible because the children were away, and the bush economy became entrenched in a way that might not have been possible otherwise. The social institutions which the Oblates sought to eliminate were reproduced in the bush, and returning children were reintegrated into the potlatch and clan system, which operates today (in spite of Steward's (1941a, 1941b) conclusion that it had disappeared by 1940). Not all children even went to the residential school. Stories of deaths at the school convinced some parents and grandparents to hide their children when





the Indian agent came to collect them, and as a result several of the older Tl'azt'enne retained their 'bush' identity. The Oblates did, however, facilitate the change from clan control of resources to a system based on patrilocal groups.

While the Oblates sought to change Tl'azt'enne culture, the state established Indian reserves and a plethora of fish and wildlife regulations.

### The State

Until 1871, British Columbia was a British colony, and policies towards Native people had little impact on the distant Nechako Plateau. After joining the Dominion of Canada in 1871, Indian affairs became a federal responsibility under a section of the British North America Act, and the federal government moved to assert its jurisdiction. The principal means by which the federal government achieved this were treaties, posting of Indian agents, and the establishment of reserves. Through legislation and acts, attempts were also made to control or eliminate aspects of Native society and culture (especially potlatching in British Columbia). Their efforts were aided by other federal departments, such as Marine and Fisheries (as noted above) and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (R.C.M.P.). The general thrust of federal Indian policies in northwestern British Columbia has been detailed elsewhere (Hudson 1978), and the focus here will be on the Nechako Plateau.

There are few treaties in British Columbia, and none covering the Nechako Plateau. A series of agreements signed between the Hudson's Bay Company and Vancouver Island Indian groups have been upheld as the equivalent of treaties (Duff 1969), and the northeastern section of





the province had been included in Treaty 8, which was designed to protect gold seekers enroute to the Yukon (Fumoleau 1975). The western extent of Treaty 8 touches Sekani territory, but no Carrier bands have been included.

The first evidence of the allocation of reserves in the Nechako Plateau occurs in 1871, when a surveyor forwarded a schedule of Indian reserves to the Indian Reserve Commission in Victoria (British Columbia, Papers Connected With the Indian Land Question, 1875:95-96). According to the report, boundaries had been established for Grand Rapide (Grand Rapids), Thatchy Indian Reserve (Tachie), Necoslie Village, and Pinchie Village (Pinchi), plus four other reserves on Babine Lake. The timing of the surveys reflects economic activities in the region; gold had been discovered in the Omineca Mountains, north of Stuart Lake, and the Nechako Plateau presented a logical point of entry. By defining Indian land, through reserves, the rest of the country became available for settlement. However, the anticipated settlement never materialized, and the 1871 reserves seem to have been forgotten.

In the late 1880s and early 1890s, the provincial government moved to develop the Nechako Plateau; a variety of development schemes involving the construction of railways were touted as a means of opening up the region to settlement. Again to define Indian land, another survey of Indian reserves took place, starting in 1892. The present reserve boundaries reflect these surveys, although some changes were made in 1916, following hearings held by a Royal Commission for Indian Affairs in British Columbia (1916). Attempts by the bands in the Stuart Lake area to obtain additional reserves through the Royal



Commission were largely unsuccessful, reflecting both the commissioners' decision that such additional lands were not required, or that such lands had already been alienated, and therefore were unavailable. The following table lists the reserves of the Stuart-Trembleur Lake Band in 1972, most of which were finalized in 1916.

Table 2 Reserves held by the Stuart-Trembleur Lake Band, 1972

Reserve Name and Number	Use (as given to Royal Commission in 1916)	Year(s) Surveyed	Size (hectares)
Tache 1	Village site, fishing stn	1871,1898	843
Pinchie 2	Village site	1871,1898	291
Nancut 3	Village site	1898	149
Ucausley 4	Fishing, garden	1898	178
Carsoosat 5	Fishing and hunting base, garden	1898	50
Whitefish Lake 6			4.5
Pinchie Lake 7			9
Pinchie Lake 7A			51
Tezzeron Lake 8			16
no name 9			
Pinchie Lake 10			10
Cunningham Lake 11	Fishing station		4
Pinchie Lake 12			78
Hanson 13		1944	4
Gelange 1	Village site	1898	378
Soyandostar 2	Fishing station, camp	1898	18
Teeslee 3	Fishing station, hunting	1898	101
Stevan 4	Fishing station, hunting	1898	20
Grand Rapids 5	Village site, fishing, hunting, hay	1871, 1898	234
Eagle Creek 6			16

As the above table indicates, most of the reserves were located at village and/or fishing sites. The distribution of reserves reflects the economic base at the time (1898-1916), and the need to have strategic fishing places. Today, as in the past, reserves function as centres from which people travel to adjacent watersheds in order to hunt, trap, and fish. The reserves themselves are small and had little economic importance as the resources were all obtained from the area off the reserves. However, reserves were established in the



region prior to extensive settlement and alienation through pre-emptions, and it is only recently that the region has been brought into production by industrial capitalism and the full implications of the restricted reserve lands have been felt. Through the pattern of reserves in the Nechako Plateau, the Tla'azt'enne have been effectively alienated from much of the means of sustaining a bush economy. The reserve holdings basically reflect the political economy of 1900, when the region was seen as marginal to anything but the fur trade.

Indian agents represent another part of the extension of government control over the Indian population. In 1890, an agency was created on the upper Skeena River. Located in Hazelton, the Indian agent covered most of the Nechako Plateau. In 1910 this agency was split, and the Stuart Lake Agency created to deal with the Stuart and Fraser Lake area. Initially located at Fraser Lake, this agency finally ended up with its office in Prince George.

With the appointment of Indian agents and the reduction of Indian lands to official reserves, the federal government had established its presence in the Nechako Plateau. Legislation was also brought in to deal with elements of Indian society. In 1884, the federal government brought forward legislation banning potlatching, one of the key activities on the Northwest Coast (cf., for example, Rosman and Rubel 1971). It will be recalled that potlatching was the means by which titles were transferred by the Carriers. The Indian Act also reduced the legitimacy of matrilineal descent, and enforced the primacy of a patrifocal family unit. Both of these have implications for the Carriers.





The extent to which a solitary Indian agent could modify native cultural practices is unclear. Loring, the first agent appointed to the upper Skeena River area, which included Gitksan and Carrier groups, reported to his superiors success in eliminating both potlatching and matrilineal inheritance of property. His report for 1894 (Indian Affairs, 1895: 159) included the following note:

It is pleasing to note that no potlatch was given in any of the villages last winter, as heretofore, and the custom is given up for the future. Instead of the former, the Indians are having memory-feasts in honour of those departed by death during the year. These feasts differ from the potlatch mainly in this respect, that no wilful waste of property is practiced, and they are mainly confined to eating, serving out tobacco and smoking.

The extent to which the Gitksan merely shifted their potlatches to a mode and time more visibly acceptable to the agent seems obvious; rather than controlling potlatching, the Indian agent had only caused a slight shift in its timing.

The same agent also believed that the matrilineal descent system had been eliminated, as is indicated in the report he made in 1895 (Indian Affairs, 1896: 158):

The Indians here, of to-day, work hard in every respect to better their conditions, especially since I have entirely broken up the old system of an uncle, or next of kin on the mother's side, unconditionally seizing everything belonging to a deceased Indian, leaving widow and children destitute. The same custom, I am grateful to state, is given up by the Hoquel-gets, so much so that only occasionally I am invoked to oppose it.

Field work by Adams (1975) in the late 1960s resulted in the publication of an ethnographic account which stressed the continuity of matrilineally-structured exchange relations as the core of Gitksan relations of production, indicating the prematurity of the Indian agent's optimism.



Other federal departments acted on Carrier society in the early 1900s. The role of the Department of Marine and Fisheries in eliminating fish weirs has already been discussed. The other department or agency, the R.C.M.P., played a support role for Indian Affairs. The R.C.M.P. had established its presence in northern British Columbia in the 1920s, and one of its functions was to ensure that reserves were actually surveyed. For example, the 1921 Report of the R.C.M.P. noted that one of its duties was:

to assist the Department of Indian Affairs in the complicated difficulties which centre in the Indian claim to the ownership of the Kitwancool valley, in northern British Columbia. This involved a visit to the Indian village by the Officer Commanding of the Prince Rupert Detachment, in company with the Indian Agent.

The report further noted that: "The enforcement of the Indian Act imposed duties on our men in all the divisions. Convictions were numerous."

A new police station was opened in 1927 at Kitwanga, on the upper Skeena River after the R.C.M.P. "had instituted proceedings against Indians of the Kitwancool village, situated nearby, for obstructing government surveyors." (R.C.M.P., Annual Report for 1927)

In 1928, an Indian from Hazelton, on the Skeena River, was prosecuted for witchcraft after charges had been laid by an R.C.M.P. officer and three years later two Carriers from Moricetown, on the Bulkley River, were given suspended sentences for a similar offence (R.C.M.P., Annual Reports for 1928, 1931).

The above events reflect the transformation of the region, economically and politically, a process which accelerated after railway construction in 1914 created an efficient means of bringing people in and products out.



### Settlement of the Nechako Plateau

For most of the nineteenth century, the Nechako Plateau had been integrated into mercantile capitalism, primarily through the fur trade. However, in the early 1900s, the region was integrated into other components of expanding Canadian capitalism, and was brought into agricultural and timber production, with some mineral development. The outcome was both an increasing use of Indian land by non-Indian settlers, miners, and foresters, and an increasing involvement by the Carriers in wage labour and commodity production.

Agricultural activities were limited prior to 1900. The Hudson's Bay Company managed to grow root crops (especially potatoes) at Fort St. James as early as 1815. The post at Fraser Lake also became a centre for growing grain and forage crops for the company (HBCA B.188/a/17, fo. 24). Agricultural implements were supplied to Stuart Lake Carriers as early as 1878 (1878 Report of the Dept. of Interior), and seeds soon became a regular part of trade (HBCA B.188/b/16, fo. 287). But overall, no extensive agricultural communities grew up in association with the fur trade. All agricultural operations were minimal and marginal, and largely confined by climate and topographical features to the valleys in the southern part of the plateau.

The main agricultural development of the Nechako Plateau took place only after the turn of the century, and even then stayed primarily in the southern valleys. The very difficulty of farming under northern conditions forced settlers to adopt a diversified economic base, and they ended up competing with the Indian population for labour positions and bush resources.





Extensive surveys of the region had taken place between 1889 and 1893, locating potential agricultural areas and mapping out future settlements (British Columbia Sessional Papers, 1893: 986 ff.). 20,000 acres between the southern end of Babine Lake and Fraser Lake had been reserved for pre-emption (Sawyer 1912:388). Settlers and speculators moved into the region around the turn of the century in anticipation of the construction of a rail line from Edmonton to the Pacific coast. Indians, however, were not allowed to pre-empt provincial land except by permission of the government - a rare event (cf. Cail 1974:27, 178, 250). A railway was finally built in 1914, with the construction phase, 1909-1914, triggering a land boom. An indication of the rapid settlement in the Nechako Plateau in the early 1900s is indicated in the Certificates of Purchase records for the Cariboo and Fort George Recording Districts, 1900-1913 in the following table:

Table 3 Number of Certificates of Purchase, 1900-1913  
(Source: Cail 1974:266-267)

Year	Cariboo District <sup>1</sup>	Fort George District <sup>2</sup>
1900	23	
1905	26	
1906	64	
1907	147	
1908	195	
1909	451	
1910		2097
1911		980
1912		757
1913		434

<sup>1</sup>Includes Nechako Plateau, 1900-1909

<sup>2</sup>Includes Nechako Plateau, 1909 on

Zaslow (1971:206) describes the economic impact which the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway had on the Nechako Plateau in the early 1900s:





The coming of the railway immediately stimulated the forest industries along the route, at first for construction requirements of the railway, then for wider markets ... The railway encouraged settlers to take up farming and grazing lands adjoining the route in the Fraser, Nechaco (sic), Bulkley, and Kispiox valleys...

Notwithstanding surveyors' reports that stressed the limited amount of productive farmland and the high-clearing costs, in the peak year, 1913, timber reserves in places like the Kitimat valley were opened to settlers, applications were received to purchase 600,000 acres, and nearly 3,900 land pre-emption claims were issued...

The speculative character of much of this settlement was recognized even at the time. The newly appointed pre-emption inspectors ... estimated that fewer than one-third of the occupants had serious intentions. The majority, they felt, were putting minimum effort into improving their claims with a view to selling out after the anticipated rise in value accompanying completion of the railway. Even more obvious were the activities of real-estate promoters who secured lands more or less adjacent to rumoured townsites which they boomed by high-pressure advertising, fleecing thousands of investors with their dubious promotions, and impairing confidence in more legitimate objects for investment. Eventually even the towns that were the objects of such attentions turned on these 'benefactors'. The completion of the construction phase along the railway, in fact, reduced the local markets for farm produce and settlers' labour, and caused an exodus from some districts. Next, the outbreak of the Great War even more effectively pricked the speculation bubble...

Indian labour became integrated into the construction boom. From 1910 to 1912, the Indian agent reported that most of the members of the Hagwilget and Moricetown bands (in the Bulkley Valley) were involved in clearing the right-of-way for the railway (Indian Affairs Branch, Annual Report for 1913, p. 269). According to the report of the Stuart Lake Indian agent for 1913 (Ibid.):

The past year has been very favourable to all bands in the southern part of the agency. These have shared in the general prosperity resulting from the construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific railway now in progress in this locality. On recommendation contractors did not hesitate to give contracts of clearing right of way, tie and cordwood cutting, and freighting to the Indians, who in every case made good.



However, the Indian population had to compete with the growing settler population for available jobs. For example, by 1919, the main occupations of settlers in the Burns Lake area, southwest of Stuart Lake, were cutting railway ties, section work on the railway, homesteading, trapping, and merchandizing (Turkhi 1973:41). In order to maintain themselves as farmers, the settlers had to expand their activities into other occupations, which in turn brought them into conflict with the Indian population, which had adopted the same strategy following the loss of sockeye salmon (cf. Hedley 1979 for a recent analysis of a similar situation facing Alberta farmers). A study of farms in the Nechako Plateau in the early 1940s pointed to the necessity for economic diversity:

Throughout the four districts (in the plateau) extensive lumbering operations are being carried on. Many farmers therefore take the opportunity to augment farm income by part time employment in that industry. Some operate their own sawmills or sell ties cut from their own farms. Others prefer to work as employees in the local sawmills. Altogether the supplement to farm income is quite large.  
(Anderson 1947:10)

#### The Continued Importance of Trapping

Along the railway belt from Prince George and Prince Rupert, settlers and farmers competed directly for fur bearing animals, and this competition was a constant source of conflict. Both the settlers and the Carriers moved into trapping because of economic necessity and the attractiveness of high fur prices in the early 1900s. As Godelier (1974:46ff.) has pointed out, though, Indian and non-Indian trappers operate in different modes of production. To the Carriers, the non-Indian trappers were exterminating the fur bearers, and creating



hardship. For example, the Fraser Lake chiefs told a Royal Commission in 1915 that:

... the practice of the Indians from time immemorial had been to conserve them (beaver) or farm the beaver colonies, keeping up the stock at all times. The white people came in, however, and killed the beaver indiscriminantly, without regard to the preservation of the stock...

... in olden days the Indians had all the country to themselves and could hunt and kill the beaver at any time. They, however, took great care of the beaver, so that there was always an abundant supply. Now the beaver has been practically exterminated by the unwise methods of the white hunters and trappers.

(Royal Commission for Indian Affairs in British Columbia, quoted in Lane (1978:35,36))

The R.C.M.P. reported conflict between Indian and non-Indian trappers in the Parsnip and Findlay River area, northeast of Stuart Lake, in 1924, (R.C.M.P., Annual Report for 1924, p.47):

Many prospectors were seen (in this area), and white trappers have entered the country and are encroaching upon the territory needed by the Indians for their subsistence...

There are at present too many trappers in the district to allow of any conservation of fur.

The same report recommended establishing a police post in the region to control the friction between white trappers and Indians.

Fur prices played an important part in the conflict over trapping. Prices climbed just after World War I, and, with some fluctuations, remained high until the 1930s. For example, the average price for a beaver pelt in British Columbia in 1910 was \$10.17; in 1927, it was \$24.99; but by 1930, it had dropped to \$12.00. The price stayed between \$11.50 and \$12.00 from 1930 until 1971, when it rose to \$16.10 (Canada Year Book 1972). As Asch (1977:52) points out in his study of trapping by the Mackenzie Valley Dene, fur prices have to be compared to commodity prices to gain a picture of relative wealth or





poverty. As long as fur and commodity prices remained stable, trapping represented a viable occupation. However, an increase in the cost of necessary commodities, coupled with a drop in the relative value of fur prices, could cause the collapse of trapping. The following chart shows that the index price of raw furs rose steadily from 1890 to about 1913, fell at the start of WW 1, and then rose dramatically. Thus, for the Tl'azt'enne, fur prices rose at the same time as the sockeye salmon fisheries collapsed.

The relationship between commodity and fur prices seems fairly stable until the 1950s. Annual reports of the Department of Indian Affairs from 1952-56 stress that low fur prices, high commodity prices, and low levels of production forced trappers to relocate their families to places where logging could be carried out. For example, the report for 1953-54 (p.53) notes that raw fur prices declined to their 1938-39 level, while commodity prices continued to advance. The report for the previous year had pointed out that:

The overall fur sale returns were in some cases less than the necessary requirements for the subsistence of families, however, and a number of trappers were forced to travel considerable distances to secure employment in the woods and in industry.

(Indian Affairs Branch, Annual Report for 1952-53, p.42)

The report for 1955-56 reiterated the situation (p.60):

Below average financial returns from trapping resulted from lower market prices and severe weather conditions. Many Indian families in the northern and coastal areas who had previously derived their livelihood from trapping have now changed their locations to points where advantage can be taken of part-time employment to augment their income from trapping.

For many Tl'azt'enne, it became necessary to move between wage labour and trapping, while maintaining access to bush resources through hunting and fishing. With the registered trapline system in



Figure 6    Index Price of Raw Furs, 1890 - 1917  
(Average price, 1890 - 1899 = 100)  
(Source: Canada Year Book, various)

Index Price

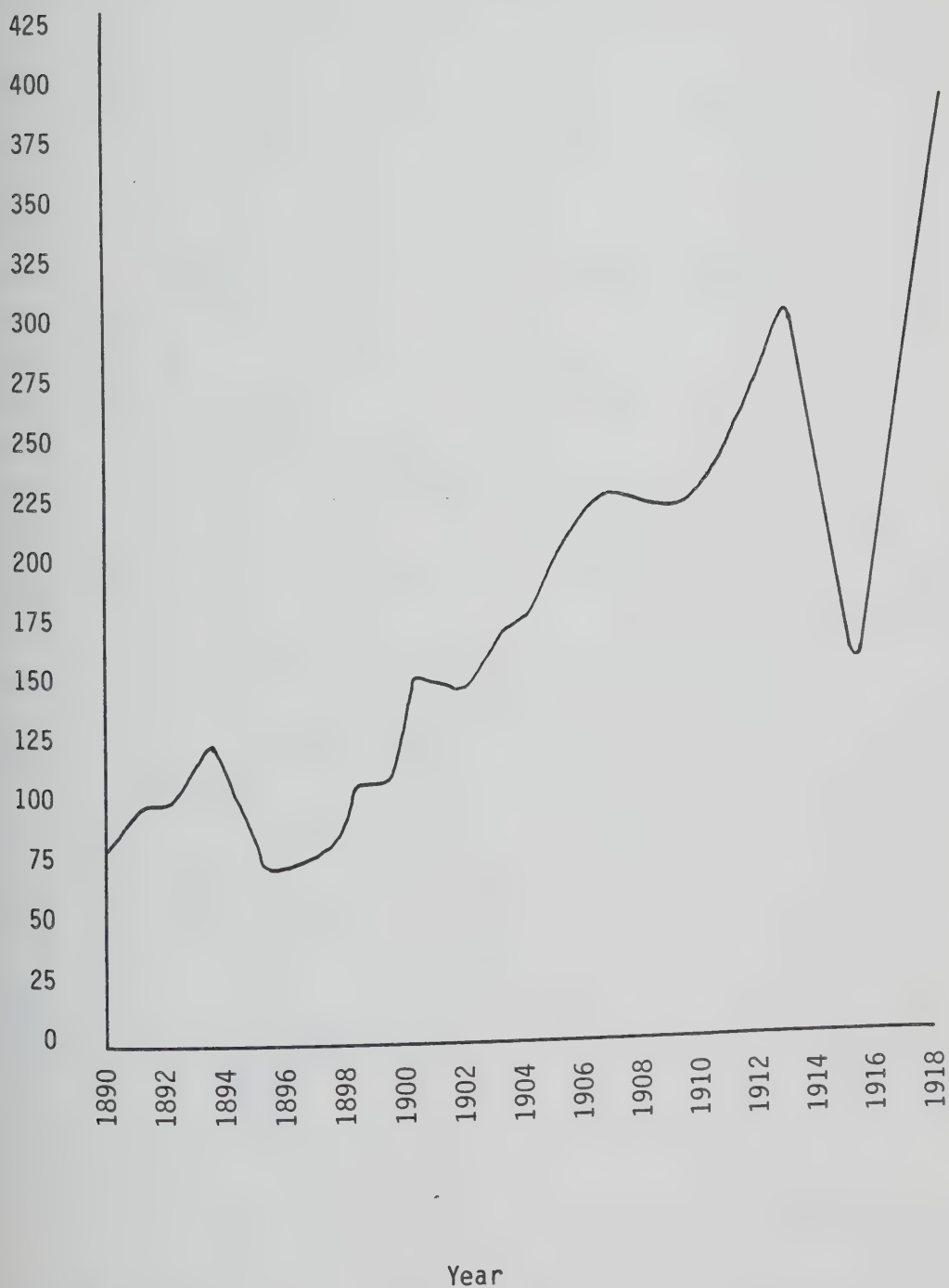
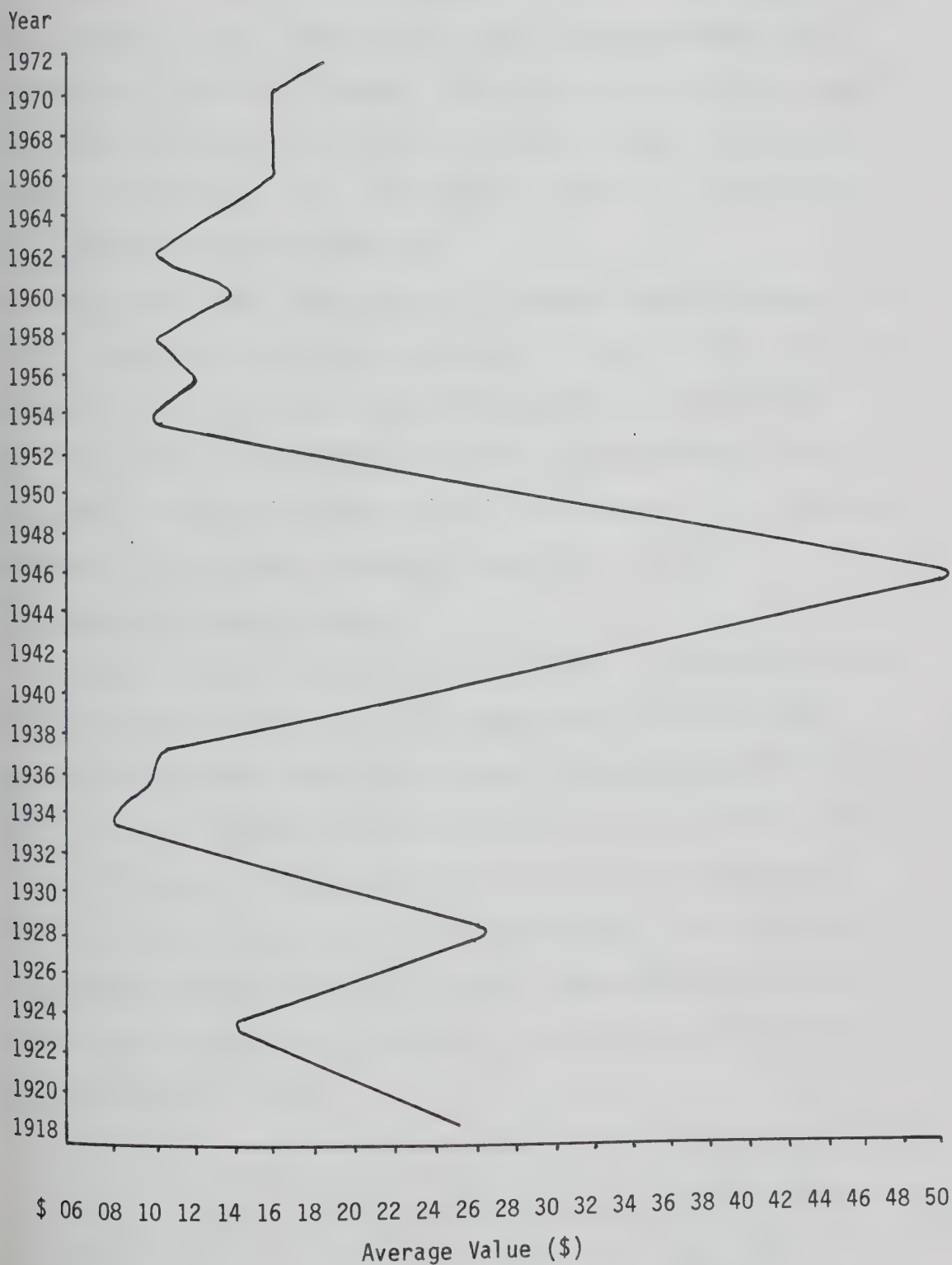




Figure 7 Average Value of Beaver Pelts, 1919 - 1972

(Source: Canada Year Book)





place, one could leave a trapline untouched for a season or two, and return to it if fur prices rose. With the seasonal nature of employment in the north, no Tl'azt'enne could afford to become dependent on wage labour. In fact, the pattern of wage labour depended on the maintenance of the bush economy. While males hauled logs for sawmill operators, the women and children fished and ran small traplines to support the families. Thus, the domestic economy and wages provided the basis for social reproduction.

Income from wage labour was used to maintain the bush economy, and fulfill reciprocal obligations to members of one's kinship group and community. In other words, the Carrier system of extrafamilial exchange obligations continued to operate, but the material basis of the former clan-deneza system had been transformed. This change was finalized by a government program to register traplines.

#### The Registered Trapline System

The British Columbia government introduced a registered trapline system in 1926 in which registered trappers held exclusive rights of production to defined territories (Canada Year Book 1955:614). Prior to this time, a trapline was held for only one year, with the possibility of renewal. However, this system was seen as providing no incentive to conserve fur resources (Butler 1962), and a more comprehensive system became operative in 1926. Resistance by Indians to registration was expected, according to one of the developers of the new system (Butler 1962:2):

It was readily realized at that time problems of priority of rights over various trap lines would be presented and as a matter of fact some Indians, especially in the Hazelton area, refused to apply for or secure registration because they claimed that trapping was their ancestral right and they would not comply with regulations made by the whiteman.





Later on, however, these Indians found they had made a mistake and after considerable difficulty their trapping areas were registered.

As a means of controlling production, the provincial government attempted to ensure that only individuals registered, in spite of the corporate nature of resource ownership found in northwestern British Columbia. However, of the approximately 3000 traplines registered in 1946, about half were held by Indians (1560), of which 258 covered group or partnership registrations. All of the Tl'azt'enne registrations in the 1920s and 1930s were done by individuals, but actual production was carried out by groups. Group registration is now common but by patricentric trapping groups, not clans.

Trapline registration by non-Indians covered Indian territories. For example, Steward (1960:734) recorded that Carrier trapping areas south of Stuart Lake were alienated this way. In 1946, the Stuart Lake Carriers petitioned the federal government to address this issue:

Acquisition and return of all former Indian trapping grounds lost to the Indians by gradual encroachment of the Whites in the past two decades, primarily owing to the ignorance of the Regulations governing registration of traplines in B.C., and in some instances, failure of Indian Department Officials to notify the Indians of the regulations, and to register accordingly.

That our ancient privilege to hunt and fish for food purposes be restored without any restrictions whatever. (Submission No. 21, pp. 874-875, dated July 23, 1946, Special Joint Committee on the Indian Act, 1946-48, House of Commons and Senate, Government of Canada)

Besides the attempts to register traplines, efforts were made to control fur production through closed seasons and quotas. For example, beaver trapping was forbidden in 1919/1920, and a beaver tag system was introduced in the 1940s. Each trapper was allowed a harvest quota, calculated on the basis of average returns from



previous years, and each pelt brought in had to have a beaver tag. For each large beaver house, the limit was two beavers. One beaver could be taken from each small house on the line (personal communications, Fish and Wildlife). Indians were not required to have licences, or give detailed lists of all fur beavers taken to the government, but the rest of the game laws applied.

In contrast to the situation around Fraser Lake and Fort St. James, settlers and non-Indian trappers did not alienate much territory which the Tl'azt'enne considered theirs. The following map (Figure 8) shows the distribution of trapping territories after the first registrations. Given a policy that traplines be kept within the original Indian band, the trapping territory has remained intact. However, as indicated below, the use of that territory for fur production has been decreased by logging activities.

While the registration of traplines corresponds to some extent to traditional band lands, the imposition of the registration system was interpreted by older Tl'azt'enne as another example of interference in their social relations of production. For example, the following comments were made during the course of discussions about trapping:

Before registration, everyone had little traplines. Nobody owns like today. Each year they (Tl'azt'enne) used to go on their lines - all winter. After registration, one person got this area.

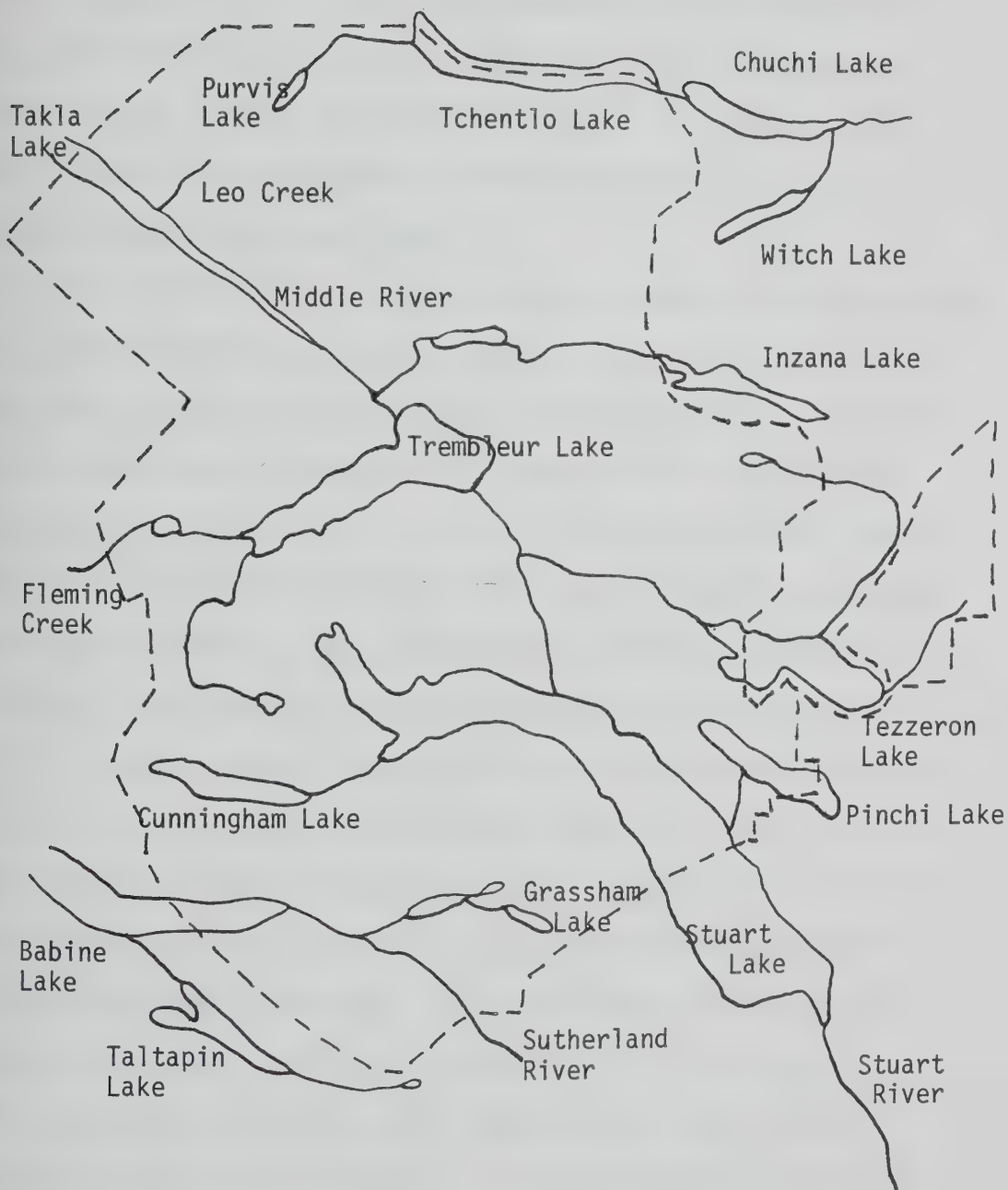
Before registration, nobody owned anything. Just go where you want. Go as a neighbour. Free country - but then a law.

Before registration line, people would go anywhere they feel like.

However, both analysis of the nineteenth century mode of production, and later discussions with the Tl'azt'enne indicated that one's freedom to trap anywhere was a function of kin ties. Those with



Figure 8 Trapping Territory of the Tl'azt'enne

Key

Approximate boundary of total trapping territory is indicated by broken line (-----)





extensive ties could trap in one of a number of areas; others were somewhat more restricted. The basic thrust, though, was that an internally controlled relationship to resources, and ultimately to people, was replaced by a system in which one trapper was granted exclusive rights to trap in a particular area. The means by which one obtains a trapline are discussed in the next chapter.

### The Forest Industry and Wage Labour

Because of the diminished sockeye salmon fisheries and the decline in fur prices relative to commodity costs in the 1950s, Tl'azt'enne turned more to seasonal work in logging and mining camps. Like agriculture, logging was an outcome of the construction of the railway through the Nechako Plateau. In its early stages, the lumber industry in the region centred on numerous, small, labour-intensive operations, called "gyppo" sawmills. Work was seasonal, and largely depended on the timing of the break-up of ice in the spring and freeze-up in the fall. In its later stages, small mills were consolidated into larger operations which operated throughout the year with a capital-intensive basis. From farm 'wood lot' operations and 'gyppo' mills in the early and mid 1900s, the forest industry in the Nechako Plateau developed into large corporate operations. Until this latter stage, Indian labour was necessary, if only on a seasonal basis, and Carrier families supported themselves with a combination of wage labour, trapping, and subsistence production. To understand the process by which Indian labour was used, the history of the logging industry in the region is outlined.

The construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway stimulated logging in the Nechako Plateau. Indians cut poles and rail ties, and



hay for logging camp horses (cf. Knight 1978:113 ff.). But the onset of World War I and the end of a Prairie construction boom in 1914 closed most north-central interior mills (Mullins 1976:26). The period from 1909 to 1939 was characterized by fluctuating market conditions, minimal technological development, and marginal producers (Mullins 1976:13). Horses and sleds were used for log transport, and the rivers and lakes for further transport and storage. Wage labour opportunities for Tl'azt'enne declined after the crest of railway construction and while some men operated small, horse-logging outfits in Stuart Lake, intensive involvement with logging had to wait until 1939 or 1940.

In the 1930s, the Carriers were virtually eliminated from wage labour. The Indian agent for the Stuart Lake agency filed estimates of earnings from various sources for the period 1918 to 1936 (see Table 4). Estimated income from wages reached a high of \$31,700 in 1924, but dropped to nothing in 1933 and 1934. Older Tl'azt'enne recall the 1930s as difficult times, when one made a precarious living by staying out on the land and trapping to obtain a few items. The following account gives some indication of the lifestyle of the period 1930-1940.

In the 1940s, in the fall, we bought sugar, tea, at the Hudson's Bay store at Takla. Men went into traplines with pack dogs, while women and children stayed in camp. We walked back to Tachie at Christmas. That took two days. We returned after New Year's. Spend two or three weeks trapping, then back to Tachie for a few days, until the end of February. Then back in April for beaver and muskrat. Return end of May, beginning of June and start fishing. Sell furs in Tachie. Then guiding for July to September for ten years.

The seasonal movements of kin groups to resource areas during this period is also reflected in the following account by a woman, who was



born at Trembleur Lake in 1895:

Long ago, there was no salmon at Tachie. Used to hunt salmon in Grand Rapids with fish traps ('əs) - no nets. Lately, the government gave them nets. The 'əs were set up at the mouth of kəzkoh (Kuzkwa River). I lived in Trembleur Lake then, before marriage. Most Stuart Lake people went to Babine Lake for salmon. After the salmon runs, in September we fished for bit (char) in Trembleur Lake and Stuart Lake in the reefs off the islands. Most of the islands belonged to the Indians, and families go to own islands. Jennie Chow Island belonged to malicoulu (Old Mary's mother). denoc'ay belonged to EJ uba (EJ's father), and the island off Caesar Point is kæsiarnu (Cassiar's island).

After bit fishing, we set traps and snares for bear. Each person went to his own trapline - go in families. We went to ts'ače (Whitefish Lake - but not the same one as biłk'a). Go up to Trembleur Lake from Tachie by boat, then families walk in. Sometimes two or three families together, plus wives and children. Have smokehouses. All have different lines.

We would stay there until Christmas; sometimes quit earlier if cold. Christmas was spent in Tachie; big potlatch. Before I was married, I lived in Trembleur Lake; after marriage, I moved to Tachie. People from Portage, Fort St. James, Pinchi, Trembleur Lake, and Grand Rapids used to gather in Tachie at Christmas and potlatch for one month. Dance every night; no fights. If people fight, put up another potlatch. That's why afraid to fight; that's the job of deneza.

After Christmas, by February 2, back out on traplines. The men would go out until Easter, but the women stayed home. Then gather at Tachie for Easter ceremonies.

In April, hunt ducks; May, fish for trout around Tachie, and start planting, fixing fences, barns, putting in crops. In June, stay home, work around house, make canoes. After planting, troll for fish. A 'əs (fish trap) was built across the Tachie River, on tæčenu (Tachie Island) to catch gusbay (suckers) and tsIntel (ling cod). July and August was hay time. Everyone had horses and cows in Tachie, Pinchi, and Fort St. James.

The logging industry expanded significantly in the period 1940-1958, with increased lumber demand, high timber prices, war time shortages of labour, equipment, and capital, and a movement into remote areas (Mullins 1976:14). A typical operation was a portable sawmill, with a few men, and an organization of production dependent





on the timing of freeze-up and thaws. Logging was done in the winter for summer cutting. Most of the mills in the Stuart and Babine Lake area operated with 15-24 employees (see Table 5), and drew seasonally on Indian labour.

'Gypso' sawmills operated along the Tachie River, Trembleur Lake, Stuart Lake, and other areas with native crews. Indian crews also carried out 'river driving', the transportation of logs down the rivers to sawmills.

The low level of necessary technology allowed Indian loggers to contract their services. Using horses, logs were pulled to rivers and floated downstream in the summer, or hauled on sleds in the winter. Technological changes in the period 1945-1955, however, displaced the Indian horse-logger. Horses and river transport were replaced by tractors and trucks, which generated a pattern of dispersed logging sawmill units around centrally located larger planing mills (Mullins 1976:33). By the mid 1950s, there were hundreds of sawmills operating in the region.

Table 4 Income: Babine and Upper Skeena Agency  
Source of Income and Amount <sup>(1)</sup>

Year	Wages	Fishing	Hunting-Trapping	Other	Total
1891		31,730	58,800		
1892		27,850	56,700		
1893		31,990	30,500	30,580	
1894		29,950	37,000	30,900	
1895		32,750	43,700	28,000	
1896		35,750	43,800	28,700	
1902	\$37,805	45,914	41,210	33,495	171,846
1908	29,700	20,000	51,800	34,800	180,000

(1) The figures are estimates as presented in Annual Reports, Department of Indian Affairs, and should be used only as indicators of trends, as Indian Agents were estimating the value of fish, for example, that was used for internal consumption.





1910 Agency split into (1) Stuart Lake Agency, and (2) Babine Agency: figures for Stuart Lake Agency are reproduced below:

Income: Stuart Lake Agency

Year	Wages	Fishing	Hunting-Trapping	Total (includes other)
1918		13,600	24,150	78,270.55
1919	10,230	14,150	33,600	96,851.00
1920	n/a			
1921	18,930	15,190	25,950	101,132.53
1922	21,915	15,770	30,730	110,960.10
1923	22,615	16,530	35,730	119,694.30
1924	31,700	15,920	37,275	127,065.96
1925	28,645	16,020	39,270	128,111.96
1926	26,000	17,620	32,160	116,562.77
1927	26,020	15,860	10,695	94,691.70
1928	25,610	14,330	13,050	93,372.90
1929	22,635	10,340	28,200	93,043.05
1930	14,300	13,640	17,950	79,709.71
1931	3,400	4,495	5,845	28,281.32
1932	80	760	745	6,050.00
1933	0	290	795	4,894.25
1934	0	0	1,630	8,669.33
1935	1,750	0	8,900	30,767.69
1936	1,550	0	6,380	18,853.18
1937	n/a			
1938	n/a			
1939				17,203.00 <sup>(2)</sup>
1940				19,673.00
1941				18,590.00
1942				21,760.00
1943				63,500.00
1944				67,300.00
1945				138,119.00

(2) Figures from North Pacific Planning Commission Project (1947:142). The criteria by which these figures were arrived at are not spelled out, and are presented only as indicators of trends.



Table 5 Sawmill Inventory

Year	Area	No. of mills with	: No. of employees		
			15-24	25-49	50-74
1954	Stuart L.		3	1	
	Babine L.		3		
1955	Stuart L.		4	1	
	Babine L.		1?	5	
1956	Stuart L.		3	1	
	Babine L.			2	
1958	Stuart L.		5	2	2
	Babine L.			1	
1957	Stuart L.		5	1	2
	Babine L.		1	1	1
1962	Stuart L. (cohorts changed)		15-49=4, 100-199=1		
	Babine L.		no data		

(Source: Figures reworked from material in Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Labour Div., B.C. Dept. of Trade and Industry)

The Prince George Forest District, which includes Stuart Lake, recorded its first mill in 1909 - at Prince George (or Fort George, as it was then called) (Mullins 1967:24). This went to fourteen mills by 1916, 43 in 1939, and 730 by 1955. The first sawmill at Fort St. James opened in 1918.

Not all the logging was done for lumber manufacture. Most of the older Tl'azt'enne men worked in the 1940s at a mercury mine on Pinchi Lake, cutting cordwood. As some of them recalled, fur prices were low, leaving them with little choice but to work for the mine. Carriers from throughout the Stuart Lake watershed worked there, alternating hunting and fishing and cutting wood. However, the mine only operated until 1944, and other sources of income had to be found.

Steward's fieldwork was done in 1940, at a time when many of the Carriers spent the summer in various forms of wage labour. To Steward, then, the operation of the bush economy and traditional



social institutions may have seemed inconsequential. Steward's (1941a, 1941b, 1941c) descriptions and conclusions reflect a moment in the history of change in the central interior, a period - however brief - when the Carriers may have seemed indistinguishable from their White neighbours.

Carriers also worked in the logging industry on Babine Lake. A report from 1945 (Department of Lands, Report for 1945:AA37) noted that:

Most of the logging on Babine Lake is done by Indians, who log the suitable areas adjacent to the lakeshore and the logs are then towed in small booms to the mills.

The decline in fur prices in the early 1950s accelerated the movement into seasonal wage labour, but hunting, trapping, and fishing remained necessary components of production. Local groups also kept cattle, selling beef and garden produce to the mines.

According to a former sawmill operator in the Stuart Lake area, 1946-1964 represented the period when Indian labour was most important in the logging industry. After 1964, employment patterns changed as the timber industry became integrated into the production requirements of pulp mills in Prince George. One author (Mullins 1967:50) declared that by 1964 small mills were an anachronism. It is about this time the Tl'azt'enne began to shift back to their villages from the sawmill towns, and expand the bush economy.

The pulp mills were established in Prince George in the mid 1960s, and both their extension into the Stuart Lake area, and the consolidation of hundreds of small operations into a few large sawmill complexes altered the relationship of the Tl'azt'enne to the logging industry. The means of production integral to the pulp-sawmill com-





plex industry also changed the relationship of the Tl'azt'enne to their resource base.

Up until the mid 1960s, most of the mills operated with a small number of men and concentrated production during the summer and winter. The seasonality of the work facilitated the maintenance of the bush economy. But as the complexes moved towards vertical corporate integration and year-round operations, an expanding non-Indian labour force displaced seasonal Indian labour. At this time, many of the Carriers from villages up the lake had been staying in a seasonal camp near Fort St. James. Some stayed, moving into Fort St. James, but most returned to the villages on a more permanent basis. The subsequent expansion of bush production was facilitated somewhat by increasing fur prices in the late 1960s and early 1970s, but more importantly by increased transfer payments (Old Age Pension, Family Allowance) from the state.

The consolidation of the logging operations also brought an expansion of the labour force, and other business interests, from outside the region, and the Indian population diminished as a proportion of the total population.

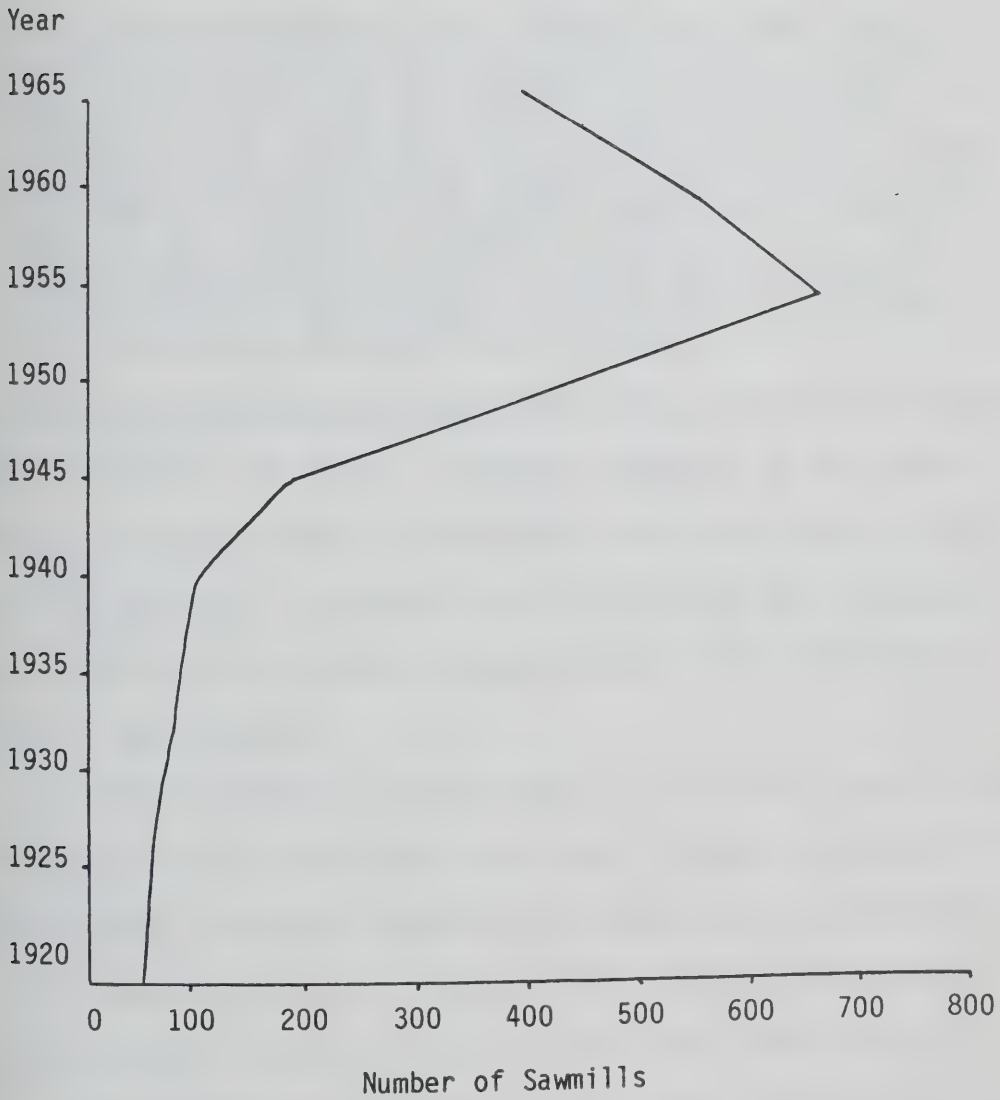
A report prepared for the British Columbia government (Ministry of Economic Development 1976:32) notes that "Since approximately World War II, there has been a steady integration and centralization of processing activity, with scores of smaller establishments ceasing to operate." As the British Columbia Regional Index (1978:523) states for the Cariboo-Fort George region, within which Stuart Lake is located:

The basis of manufacturing activity is the forest industries. Wood and paper products together accounted for 94 per cent of



Figure 9 Number of Active Sawmills in the Northern Interior,  
1920 - 1965

(Adapted from Mullins 1967)





employment and 93 per cent of the value of factory shipments. In 1974 there were 6 pulp mills, 6 veneer and plywood plants and 95 sawmills, planer mills and shingle mills recorded by Statistics Canada.

Demographic and economic changes in the Vanderhoof area, which includes Fort St. James, Stuart Lake, and Takla Lake, reflect the above dependence on forest products:

In 1977 the population of the Vanderhoof Area was 14,049 persons, an increase of 25.4 per cent from 1971. A large part of this growth was attributable to rationalization and expansion of the forest industries... Fort St. James was transformed from little more than a trading post to a growing industrial community with the advent of rail service in the late 1960's. Subsequent extension of the rail line north of Fort St. James created considerable economic activity, not only in construction but also in mineral exploration and forest industries development adjacent to the rail corridor. (British Columbia Regional Index 1978:561)

The provincially-owned British Columbia Railway was seen as a means of gaining access to the forest and mineral resources of the region northwest of Stuart Lake. An extension from Prince George to Fort St. James was completed in 1968 and the following year work commenced on a rail line from Fort St. James to Dease Lake, in the northwestern corner of the province.

The railway located on Indian reserve land for its right-of-way along the shores of Stuart and Takla lakes. Based on an apparent agreement that the Stuart-Trembleur Lake Band was to receive three acres in return for each acre taken by the railway, right-of-way clearing through reserves took place in the late 1960s and early 1970s, with band members employed. Actual construction of the rail line began in 1972, at which time the band formally complained that the operations prevented access to hunting, fishing, and trapping areas, and that the railway had adversely affected trapping revenue.



In 1973, the band demanded that negotiations commence on a settlement of the three-for-one land exchange and a cash payment of \$7 million. By joint agreement, a social and economic impact study was carried out in 1973-74 to attempt to place a dollar value on revenues lost in the bush economy. At that time the British Columbia Railway argued that Fish and Wildlife Branch records of the provincial government indicated that Indian trappers underutilized traplines, and further that the employment of Indians on right-of-way clearing crews provided cash to the community. As much of this research is directed to showing that trapping is only one aspect of a larger bush economy that cannot be legitimately quantified as a commercial venture, we can refer to the response of the band to the allegations that wages constitute payments over and above work done. The band council, August 10, 1975, replied to the railway that:

There is an implication that these sums of money is a partial compensation on their (British Columbia Railway) part for taking our land. We question this. Do they want our Band members to work for free. We feel that anyone who works for the Railway is entitled to wages for the work he/she does.

On April 28, 1975, the band blockaded the railway which ran through its reserves. The blockade remained up until August 15, 1975.

The passage of the railway through Tl'azt'enne resource areas forced the people to make public their culture, and present their relationships to land and resources and, through continuous use of the same region, to each other. It also underlined the fact that Tl'azt'enne resource areas had been brought into timber production by state and corporate interests, and that Indian assertions about aboriginal title or alternative (and historically prior) resource uses were seemingly irrelevant.





At the time of fieldwork, then, there were two modes of production in the Stuart Lake area: a bush-oriented mode, with utilization of renewable wildlife resources by producers controlling the necessary means of production, and tied to other producers by exchange and kinship; and a capitalist mode of production, with industrial operations employing labourers in sawmills. Also attached to the forest industry were independent loggers, who contracted with the sawmills to deliver logs. An analysis of their relationship to the capitalist mode of production is beyond the scope of this study, but like the Alberta farmers which Hedley (1979) has described, they were dependent on fixed costs and the need to renew their technology in order to stay in business. Unlike the Tl'azt'enne, though, their knowledge of how to use bush resources is limited, and their economic strategies likely entail selling their operations and becoming wage labourers.

The capitalist mode of production is dominant in the region. Its organization of production sets ultimate limits on the operation of the bush economy. Dependent upon continued expansion and world markets, the pulp-forest complex operations "clear-cut" blocks of hundreds of hectares of forest. Using the clear-cutting approach, all trees in a given area are harvested - some for lumber, and the rest for pulp. In the past, only selected trees were cut. But the production demands and the often marginal spruce forests require clear-cutting. These operations, however, take place in Tl'azt'enne trapping territories. While fur prices have continued to rise since the Tl'azt'enne shifted back to bush production, the means of trapping production have been curtailed.



To gain access to timber resources, the forest companies have created an extensive network of roads into their resource hinterland. This, in turn, has opened up Tl'azt'enne fishing lakes and hunting areas to non-Native fishermen and hunters. Two small fishing lakes were closed during the course of fieldwork because access by logging roads precipitated a fishing rush, which the limited natural production of the lakes was unable to sustain.

### Summary

The penetration of the Nechako Plateau by state, missionary, and industrial interests after 1900 resulted in the transformation of the bush mode of production. By the mid-1900s, the region had become fully integrated into the national economy as a resource hinterland, timber had replaced fur as the major staple, and the utility of Carrier labour had diminished. Due to abolition of traditional fishing technology, the collapse of sockeye salmon runs, and dropping fur prices, the Carriers found themselves increasingly dependent on income-producing activities at a time when their role in industrial operations was decreasing. A mixed economy emerged as the basis for social reproduction, with hunting, trapping, fishing, wage labour, and - later - social assistance all contributing to household incomes.

In the early and mid-1900s income-producing activities were integrated into a seasonal cycle centred around the harvesting of bush resources. But the difficulties of accommodating seasonal bush resource activities with the demands of integrated, year-round forestry operations increased, reaching a climax in the mid-1960s. Marginal to the labour demands of industrial capitalism, and competing with an increasing non-Indian labour force in the immediate area, many



of the Tl'azt'enne increased their use of bush resources. The expansion of the bush economy in the 1960s and 1970s was facilitated by the availability of cash from transfer payments which could be used to purchase the technology necessary to maintain the means of trapping production.

Substantial changes had occurred in the material base of the Carrier economy and these, plus several other factors, served to alter the relations of production of the bush economy. The clan leaders, or deneza, lost their control over resource use as the trapline registration program shifted land to family trapping groups and household fishing nets replaced weirs. Pressure by missionaries and Indian agents further undermined the matrilineal inheritance of rights to estates.

However, exchanges of bush resources continued, as households could not support themselves just on either bush production or wage labour. The Carriers had become integrated into the national and regional economies, dependent for social reproduction on both income-producing activities and hunting, trapping, and fishing. The visibility of the bush economy, however, sometimes masks the flow of cash needed to sustain it.

In this chapter, we have seen the impact of the incorporation of the Nechako Plateau into capitalist production and state administration. From an integral role during the stage of mercantile capitalism, the Tl'azt'enne, and other Carrier groups, became increasingly dependent on commodity production, wage labour, and transfer payments. They finally became irrelevant to industrial capitalism, setting the stage for an expansion of the bush economy.





Throughout all the stages of capitalist penetration, hunting, trapping and fishing remained integral parts of Tl'azt'enne social reproduction, and internal redistributive mechanisms continued to operate. The present dependence on bush production reflects the marginal position of the Carrier Indians to capitalism, and their adaptation to that situation.

One of the most important changes in the early 1900s was the removal of the material basis of the traditional clan-deneza system. Prior relations of production centred on weirs and salmon were rendered irrelevant by changing economic conditions and the emergence of trapping companies in patrilocal communities. However, as described later, the clans continued to play a role in providing a framework for exchange.

But the Tl'azt'enne mode of production is in turn a dependent one, articulated with, and dominated by, industrial and state capitalism, which will ultimately determine the limits of bush production. In the following chapter, the elements of this contemporary bush mode of production are examined, and how products from both the bush and capitalist mode of production are redistributed in the Carrier communities through the clan-potlatch system.



## Chapter 6 The Contemporary Carrier Mode of Production

### Introduction

While specific elements of the material and social basis of the nineteenth century mode of production have been transformed, total dependence on wage labour and other income-producing activities has not been reached. Neither has the nuclear family emerged as an autonomous production unit. This chapter indicates the contemporary importance of animals, fish, and other products of the land to the Tl'azt'enne, and the social frameworks within which resources (including those from the capitalist sector) are appropriated and redistributed through reciprocal exchange ties. As a concept, the bush mode of production can be viewed as a set of technical and social relations and skills used by a particular group in a defined ecological and historical context. For that reason, this chapter will necessarily be descriptive and indicate not only the means - technical and social - by which resources are obtained and redistributed, but the ecological problems which have to be solved, and the issue of the reproduction of a subsistence economy within a region which is undergoing industrial transformation.

The bush mode of production is also a concept which links a group in a specific way to its environment. In contrast to the structure of



capitalist production, within which it is reproduced, this mode presents a situation where producers control the means of production, and much of what is produced is consumed by the units of production. In other words, there is a premium on use value. But production units are also kin groups, and local groups have kin in other local groups with whom they exchange bush food and industrial products. So the fundamental difference is not use value versus exchange value, but rather the uses of resources within the Native community, and the role of kinship in structuring exchange. Food then, is produced for consumption within the Carrier community - in most cases by the production groups themselves, but also by kin and neighbours. The bush mode of production also must be divided into subsistence production and trapping. Both entail different uses of land and resources; through trapping, a cash crop - fur - is produced which has to be traded outside the local group to have any value. Some fur bearers are also eaten, but trapping is primarily a means to obtain cash. Further, while most people can hunt and fish, only those actually registered on a trapline are legally entitled to trap. As traplines were registered when the native population was at one of its lowest points in recorded history (1920s), an expanding population has resulted in a dichotomy between those who do and do not possess a trapline. Because many fishing areas are located within trapping areas, the land tenure system associated with trapping is often informally extended to cover all resources within the territory, creating a problem for those who see all non-fur resources as common property. Trapping is also the first economic activity that linked subsistence production to the demands of capitalism, specifically mercantile capitalism. But social



reproduction is not solely contingent upon trapping, and traplines seem to represent an affirmation of Indian rights as much as a means to produce cash. Trapping is not an economic enterprise in the same sense that farming is, although there are some similarities. A basic difference is that a trapper does not have to work to maintain his trapline, i.e., to reproduce the means of production, and the line cannot be repossessed (because it is not mortgaged). Control of a trapping territory is as much a means to control subsistence production as it is to generate wealth.

Cash and goods are also obtained from the capitalist mode of production, and are redistributed along with bush resources according to the obligations of reciprocity in the clan-potlatch system.

To understand the reproduction of the bush mode of production, and the kinds of social and exchange relations which define it, we must deal with several factors: the ecological context of this mode of production, especially in the sphere of subsistence production, and the maintenance of certain productive relations in the context of both the rules of an expanding Canadian society and the impact of specific elements of capitalist production which may limit access to, or compete for, habitats containing bush resources.

We must also deal with the adjustments of subsistence production and trapping to capitalist production, and the use of industrial goods in maintaining subsistence production. In the fur trading era, capitalist production had, in some senses, to adapt to the structure of bush production, and synchronize its operations with underlying ecological imperatives. The seasonality of early logging operations also fitted into the requirements of bush production, although there





is no evidence to lead to the conclusion that logging also had to adapt to native subsistence production. Seasonal variations, especially climatic ones, required that logging assume certain production schedules - given the state of the technology. The recent transformation of logging technology, especially the ability (perhaps one should say need) to utilize small timber has enabled the industry to overcome certain environmental limitations inherent in the old technologies, and through this to alter the working conditions. The forest industry is not immune from natural production cycles, though. Trees are harvested in the Stuart Lake area on the basis of a regenerative time, or cycle, of 93 years. In other words, close to a century is required for marketable growth to appear in logged areas.

In general, hunting, trapping, fishing, and gathering take place in the lake basins and rivers of the Stuart Lake watershed. Microenvironments of varying productivity are used by different production units, but activities usually focus on the utilization of a range of resources within particular watersheds. The importance of considering watersheds as units of analysis with respect to renewable resources has been stressed by the ecologist Odum (1972:123); the alignment of settlements and the pattern of resource use reflect this. There are several watersheds of varying sizes in the range occupied by the Tl'azt'enne, of which the most important is Stuart Lake itself. Sockeye salmon runs migrate along the north shore and the Tachie River towards Takla Lake in the fall, and whitefish and char spawn on the reefs by numerous islands. Lakeside flora provide browse for moose and other game, as well as abundant berry patches. Smaller watersheds feeding into Stuart Lake produce whitefish, char, and other fish



species, as well as habitat for moose, bear, and fur-bearing animals. While lacking salmon, some of the smaller lakes provide abundant lake fish. For example, Cunningham Lake and Whitefish Lake have been used for centuries by the Tl'azt'enne because of their whitefish, char, and sucker populations. The resource use map (Figure 10) sketches out the main lakes and rivers in the Tl'azt'enne homeland, and indicates locations of resource use from the period 1975-1977. Details of the bush economy are described below.

Trapping also takes advantage of resources contained within watersheds, particularly smaller ones. Traplines are run along shorelines and up creeks to take advantage of game paths and a vertical distribution of various types of fur bearing animals. No activity, though, is mutually exclusive. Trappers carry guns in case a moose is spotted, fish nets are set to provide food and bait for the traps, and trapping cabins serve in the off season as fishing or hunting stations. The Tl'azt'enne use the term trapline as a shorthand statement of total resource rights. One's trapline is where one hunts, traps, and fishes, and the right to use the resources of a particular area are often associated with the possession of a trapline. For example, the term keyoh means, at various times, my home, my trapline, my land or country, and "the place where I get my living from the land."

Most Tl'azt'enne depend on the resources available within the Fraser River drainage system, in which Stuart Lake is the most important. The Tl'azt'enne, however, also utilize the resources found in the Skeena River drainage system, primarily at the head of Babine Lake, and, to a lesser extent, those of the Peace-Mackenzie River system, to the north. As noted earlier, the differential productivity



Figure 10 Tl'azt'enne Resource Use Map  
(1975 - 1977)



Key

- Indian Village (permanent)
- ◐ Indian Village or Camp (Seasonal)
- ▲ Fort St. James
- sa salmon (sockeye)
- ch char
- wf whitefish





of Stuart and Babine Lakes was an important economic underpinning of the mode of production encountered in 1800, and like the Tl'azt'enne, the Hudson's Bay Company moved to integrate this difference into its operations. The need to draw on the resources of Babine Lake is no longer critical for the survival of the Tl'azt'enne as a whole, but one extended family group moves there annually to fish for sockeye salmon.

Land and resources are represented to the non-Indian as collectively owned by Indians, or dakeł. But within the Tl'azt'enne community itself, patrilocal production groups direct their activities to areas where they have specific ancestral rights. Some of these rights may be collective, while others may be restrictive at the production level. For example, all Indians in Stuart Lake can fish for sockeye salmon, while non-Indians cannot. However, Necoslie Carriers set their nets off the village of Necoslie, Tachie Tl'azt'enne set their nets in front of the village of Tachie, and so on. Within the villages, production groups set nets in front of their houses. As houses usually contain kin clusters, places for setting nets can be seen as associated with the continuous use of particular areas by particular kin groups. Trapping involves a more restricted production system, and is described in detail below. One obtains a trapline from the former owner, and thereby gains the right to control production on that line. Land, then, becomes a necessary means of trapping production, and one's control over a section of trapping territory reinforces the Tl'azt'enne methods of social continuity.

Land, however, is increasingly being alienated from Indian control, as it is brought into timber production. While the



Tl'azt'enne control the reproduction of the bush mode of production in terms of the distribution of rights, the ultimate continuation of the bush economy, or aspects of it, depends on the extent to which tracts of land are logged off.

The present Tl'azt'enne mode of production operates at two fundamental levels: production and exchange. At the production level, individual households, or domestic production groups, control their own production. Most, or all, households possess, or can borrow, the technology necessary to fish and hunt. The technology necessary for basic subsistence production is simple, and production limits depend to a great extent on available labour. For example, salmon fishing requires a boat, motor, and nets. Floats for the nets are carved from wood, and stones are used for sinkers. To set the nets, two people are required - one to control the boat, and the other to set the nets. Processing the fish requires labour - one person could do the work, but the number of salmon caught per setting determines the amount of work required. Large numbers of fish requiring gutting, cleaning, and so forth, present problems to domestic groups with few workers, but most production units expand their work force by bringing in adults and children. To finish the job, a smokehouse or freezer is required. Cash for the purchase of store food and implements for use in the bush economy is generated within each household by a variety of means, primarily wage labour and transfer payments.

Each production group has access to different resource zones, and expands or contracts production in these areas to meet its own needs. While all production groups have access, potentially or actually (depending on the available technology) to subsistence resources



(moose, fish, berries), not everyone has a trapline. In this case, production of fur bearing animals is not dependent just on technology, but involves differential access to a particular means of production. Traplines are controlled by patricentric and patrilocal groups.

At the exchange level, domestic production groups transfer bush resources and industrial products through consanguineal and affinal ties throughout the community. In this way, production fluctuations can be overcome. Exchange at this level defines, in part, the various kin groups which make up Tl'azt'enne society. Each kin-exchange group differs, and has access to different resource areas. Thus, production surpluses from one production group within a kin-exchange group may not reach all the Tl'azt'enne. In fact, because of the marriage pattern, some kin-exchange groups extend their ties throughout the Stuart Lake basin, including Necoslie.

The ties between Tl'azt'enne are diffuse, and one cannot readily isolate kin-exchange groups in advance of actual exchanges. Coalitions, factions, and other personal factors all contribute to a complex network of kin, neighbours, and friends. However, extended family groups consume food produced by a member, and beyond that one has a vaguely defined group of relatives, called snatneku, "my relative", which is structurally similar to a bilateral kindred. Ties within snatneku provide optional bases of association and exchange, and, perhaps most importantly, the redistribution of traplines.

A more structured framework within which exchange takes place is provided by a matrilineal descent group-potlatch system, which links all the members of the community. Through the application of the principle of matrilineal descent, everyone has an ascribed status.





Members of the matrilineal descent groups in turn perform services for each other which ensure that the community is interdependent. Through potlatching, a structure of receivers and givers becomes evident.

Part of the production carried out by households is directed towards potlatching, and the community is involved in an on-going series of reciprocal exchanges involving food, labour, and material goods drawn from both modes of production.

Potlatch activities indicate the logic of internal redistribution and how the two modes of production are articulated. Commercial items used in potlatches, like store food and goods, are contributed by individuals and households for redistribution, along with bush food.

The Tl'azt'enne have three matrilineal descent groups, or societies as they call them, which carry out potlatching, the operation of which is described below after we discuss the material base of the bush economy.

The bush economy, operating through techniques of hunting, trapping, and fishing, is important at several levels. Practically, bush resources provide much of the material basis for social reproduction. Without bush resources, the Tl'azt'enne would become more dependent on costly imported store foods of less nutritional value. While operating with elements of industrial technology, Tl'azt'enne bush production is still technologically simple and labour intensive and the producers control the means of production. Bush production provides the material basis for reciprocity and exchange; fluctuations in the microenvironments used by various production units can be overcome by distributing excess production or receiving in times of shortage. Politically, the bush mode of production reproduces a set





of non-capitalist relations to the land and its resources - a mode of production in which production and exchange are embedded in kinship. The social continuity of the Tl'azt'enne is reflected, and reproduced, in production and exchange, giving a concrete representation of land claims and aboriginal title. Finally, the bush economy is important symbolically: through hunting, trapping, and fishing the Tl'azt'enne replicate activities carried out by their male ancestors. Potlatching serves to maintain the purpose of matrilineal descent groups, again a cultural legacy from the past, or adad'ene, "the people of long ago". All activities are carried out in a framework of kinship, which extends horizontally to encompass all Tl'azt'enne, and vertically to touch up with one's ancestors, who occupied the same space at a different time. The operation of the bush mode of production which is described below cannot be understood without realizing that the Tl'azt'enne have occupied, socially and materially, the Stuart Lake watershed for hundreds, and perhaps thousands of years, and that production and exchange are social as well as material. One uses bush resources as a descendant of an ancestor who also used those, or similar, bush resources in the same place. One's right to produce, then, comes from a demonstration of links to that ancestor. The social relations derived from the bush economy provide a framework for the redistribution of items and cash drawn from the industrial economy.

### Forces of Production

The bush economy of the Tl'azt'enne involves the utilization of moose, fish, and several species of fur-bearing animals through techniques of hunting, fishing, and trapping. All resources to which the



Tl'azt'enne have direct access are characterized by seasonality and periodicity, or cyclical fluctuations. In addition, regulations set and enforced by the Fish and Wildlife Branch of the British Columbia government affect access by setting quotas or periods within which use of particular resources is restricted.

All of the resource use takes place in the watersheds discussed above and the juxtaposition of various types of resources within geographically compact, but ecologically diverse, habitats means that several resources are obtained at the same time from the same area. For example, after fishing nets are set, moose hunting may take place as the shorelines are surveyed.

### Hunting

The main large animals used by the Tl'azt'enne are moose, known locally as dəni; deer, or yəsčə; and caribou, xədzi. Of these, moose is by far the most important.

Moose are hunted in the habitat along the rivers and lakes, along the roads, and in clearings often created by logging. Fall is the best time for hunting moose, as rutting takes place then, decreasing caution by the moose. This is accompanied by a movement into open areas (Child 1974:29). The meat is dried and smoked, with some fried up as 'moose steaks'. Women carry out the processing of meat, and scrape and tan the hides for later use in the manufacture of moccasins and other commercial items. Some families keep and use the head and intestines. In the past, moose tibias were made into hide-scraping tools, but bent iron has largely replaced them. Moose brains or fish heads form the basis of a softening solution used to prepare hides for tanning.



Moose hunting in general is an opportunistic enterprise. Rifles are carried by the men whenever they travel in case a moose is spotted. Several of the moose obtained were taken by travellers not out on moose hunts. Several planned moose hunting treks by boat and truck were unproductive.

While moose is the most important ungulate, and one of the key food sources, for the Tl'azt'enne, its actual presence in the region dates only to about 1900, when a significant southward expansion of moose occurred in central British Columbia (Child 1974; Cowan and Guiguet 1956). The reasons for the influx are varied: a climatic shift in the late 1800s, with a replacement of subarctic flora by montane biomes, coupled with a removal of climax forests by logging, settlement, and railway construction created a habitat of transitional flora suitable for moose. Any caribou herds in the Stuart Lake region had disappeared by at least 1920 (Bishop 1921:G34). By the early 1900s, moose had become an important food source for the Indian people throughout the Nechako Plateau.

The post 1960s expansion of logging operations, particularly the use of clear-cutting, in the region has undoubtedly increased moose habitat, but the catch by the Tl'azt'enne has not necessarily matched the overall increase. The network of roads constructed to gain access to the forest resources has facilitated access to the watersheds by non-Tl'azt'enne hunters, who are able to drive from expanding urban centres in the region to moose habitats in one day. Thus, at the very time when patterns of ecological succession generated by logging operations have increased the overall moose population theoretically





available to the Tl'azt'enne, the net harvest of moose obtained by the Tl'azt'enne may be decreasing.

Other ungulates hunted include deer and caribou. Few deer were taken during the course of fieldwork, and their contribution to the overall bush economy seems slight. Even less important are caribou. Only one Tl'azt'enne hunting party has obtained caribou, as the caribou ranges fall outside the Stuart Lake basin, primarily in the mountains to the north. One Tl'azt'enne hunting party drove north to caribou ranges in the early 1970s, and was able to kill several. But unlike moose, caribou cannot be readily intercepted in Tl'azt'enne resource areas.

Small game used for food include beaver, or ca (t<sub>sa</sub>), and marmot, detni. Primarily obtained for its pelt, beaver is also eaten. Similarly, marmots are hunted in the mountains in the fall for their fur, but are also eaten by some.

Beaver meat was important in the nineteenth century when the Stuart Lake region lacked a dependable ungulate population. Its value as food was stressed in 1915 to the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for British Columbia which, at the meeting in Fort St. James, was told by the Necoslie chief that non-Indian trapping and poisoning of beavers had led to a crisis, and that: "The Indians wanted the meat even more than the skins, to dry it for use. They therefore protested against the waste of the white men's methods." (Proceedings of Hearings, June 15, 1915. B.C. Provincial Archives)

Today, beaver are hunted in the spring, and trapped in the winter. Bush resources are shared with kin. As explained by one Tl'azt'en:

If somebody shot a moose now, we could divide it up in our area. Like give a bit to our grandchildren in the next camp.



## Fishing

The mainstay of the bush economy is fish, and has been since the first encounter with Europeans. Sockeye salmon or taloh, is the main fish resource for most of the Tl'azt'enne. An anadromous species, sockeye salmon is found in the Skeena and Fraser River drainage systems, migrating up the rivers to spawn in streams adjacent to large interior lakes. There are two of these spawning runs in the Stuart Lake watershed, and one to the head of Babine Lake (on the Fraser and Skeena systems, respectively).

Lake char, or bit, and whitefish, ʔoh, are the next most important fish species. Both of these are non-anadromous, but have spawning cycles completely within the lake basin.

Other food fish include kokanne (landlocked sockeye salmon), or gesəl; Rocky Mountain whitefish, ʔus; ling cod (burbot), cIntəl; Dolly Varden, tsabai; and rainbow trout, dəkai.

Occasionally caught, but not of great importance in the economy, are two other anadromous species: Spring or Chinook salmon, ges; and White sturgeon, ʔohčō (literally, "big fish"). Spring salmon spawn in the Stuart River, below the outlet of Stuart Lake, and rarely enter the lake itself. As most net fishing is carried out in the lake, few of this species of salmon are caught. However, in the nineteenth century the Necoslie Carrier made annual movements down the Stuart River to places where the fish could be speared. Similarly for sturgeon, the historical records indicate that they were rarely used because the technology was inadequate. However, in one season, the Hudson's Bay Company netted over a dozen. Their presence today is considered more of a nuisance than a food source, particularly when



they get caught in the salmon nets. A white sturgeon in Stuart Lake can be as much as two metres long and weigh 35 kilograms.

Other fish species abundant in the Stuart Lake watershed but not considered an important food source include suckers, or gusbai, and others known as "old peoples' fish", or "starvation fish."

Sockeye salmon move through the Stuart Lake system in two migrations, or spawning runs. The first, or Early Stuart run, takes place between July 10 and August 10 each year, peaking July 25. The second, or Late Stuart run, goes from August 5 to September 25, and peaks between August 30 and September 5 (Cooper and Henry 1962:2). The Early Stuart run spawns in tributaries of Takla Lake and Middle River, both of which are above Trembleur Lake and therefore pass in front of the major Tl'azt'enne villages. The Late Stuart run spawns mainly in the Middle River and Tachie River, giving access to the complete run to the larger Tl'azt'enne villages, while a lesser - but still significant - part of the run passes through Trembleur Lake. The Early Stuart run itself seems to have been insignificant until 1894, and only achieved a reasonable level of abundance after 1949, when fish ladders were constructed along the lower Fraser River (Cooper and Henry 1962:5). Unlike the single dominant run in the nineteenth century, the Tl'azt'enne now have access to two runs. However, both runs have synchronized peaks and lows, and factors affecting one will influence the other.

All of the Tl'azt'enne villages, except Portage, fall along the migrating route of the sockeye salmon, which hugs the north shore of Stuart Lake, and passes up the Tachie River. Portage, at the head of Stuart Lake, may have had a run in the past, but in the memory of the



oldest people, these villagers had to move to Babine Lake in the fall for sockeye salmon. Several families obtain salmon from their relatives in neighbouring villages.

As indicated earlier, sockeye salmon in the Fraser River system run in a four year cycle, with one year, or line, dominant, and the others less productive. The largest run occurs in the 1901 line, which means that large runs occur (in theory) every four years from 1901 (1905, 1909, ..., 1973, 1977, 1981). The 1902, 1903 and 1904 lines have less productive runs. The research period included a dominant run (1977, which is on the 1901 line), and two lesser runs (1975, and 1976).

Estimates of the number of salmon escaping the commercial fishing areas and actually thought to be headed for the spawning grounds have been made for Stuart and Babine Lakes, and give some indication of variations between lines. Based on samples from 1951 to 1962, Aro and Shepard (1967:302) indicate the following estimated escapement of sockeye salmon to Stuart Lake in each of the four lines:

Table 6 Estimated Escapement of Sockeye Salmon to Stuart Lake

Line	Equivalent Year During Fieldwork	Estimated Escapement
1901	1977	589,600
1902	1974	35,500
1903	1975	26,800
1904	1976	24,500

The 1902, 1903, and 1904 lines contain only 6%, 4.5%, and 4% respectively, of the estimated escapement of the 1901 line, indicating the tremendous cyclical fluctuation of one of the key Tl'azt'enne resources.





At present, only one salmon spawning stream on Babine Lake is used by the Tl'azt'enne (Sutherland River, at the head of the lake). Its estimated average escapement of 9,900 sockeye salmon (Aro and Shepard 1967:300) is well below the Stuart Lake runs, but at present only one extended family group uses it.

The above figures represent estimates, or guesses, about the number of sockeye salmon actually reaching spawning grounds. Based on irregular samples taken along the migration routes, the numbers must be used with caution. However, they do give an idea of seasonal fluctuations and a measure of the percentage of salmon spawning versus the number taken by Indian fishermen along the way.

As the migrating route of the sockeye salmon in Stuart Lake follows the north shore, the villagers located there place nets to intercept the run. Nets are set in front of the villages, over shallows where the fish pass near the mouths of streams. Households within the villages try to set nets as close to their foreshore as possible, minimizing travel. Some family groups set clusters of nets in the same location, or join nets to create one long barrier. Nets are set by a crew usually consisting of a woman, who sets the nets, and a boy or adult male, who manoeuvres the craft. Locations are marked by floating plastic containers, and retained for the duration of the fishing season. The technology is simple: nets are made from twine, floater sticks carved by men, and rocks attached as weights. Fish processing is primarily a female occupation: initial gutting is done by the lake, then the salmon are hung outside for a couple of days for initial drying. After that, they are split and placed in smokehouses for up to a week.



Access to salmon depends on a number of factors. The technological basis has been described above. The amount of production is also limited by the available labour. A large catch requires an expanded number of female labourers, and girls and boys may be pressed into service. Each extended family group draws on itself for labour, although a boy may be borrowed to take a boat out if a household is temporarily lacking a male (or a female with the requisite skills).

Weather conditions also influence production. Several fishing days were lost during the period of fieldwork because of adverse weather conditions. The Stuart Lake watershed is particularly susceptible to gusty winds sweeping down from the northwest and turning the lake into a maelstrom within a matter of hours. In contrast to the nineteenth century, when weirs were used for salmon fishing, the Tl'azt'enne have to actually go out onto the lake. The effective technology of the nineteenth century has been replaced with a dependent technology which requires favourable climatic and technological conditions in order to work.

Fish and Wildlife regulations also have an impact on fishing. Regulations dating to 1905 or 1906 prohibit salmon fishing during the day or on weekends. As a result, nets usually are set in the evenings during the week, and withdrawn in the mornings. It is illegal to obstruct streams, so nets have to be set away from stream mouths. The latest regulation, resisted by the Tl'azt'enne, calls for a special licence to be taken out by Indians fishing for food. Government regulations have also attempted to limit the distribution of salmon caught by an individual to his/her own nuclear family in order to eliminate the exchange of fish between members of an extended family or kin group.



Examples of actual salmon production in the Stuart Lake watershed indicate the extent to which the Tl'azt'enne are dependent on their fisheries. These are given in Appendix 1.

While sockeye salmon is the most important food fish, several lakes in the Stuart Lake watershed produce abundant supplies of whitefish, which are taken at various times of the year, including winter. During the period when salmon was low in Stuart Lake, these lakes assumed critical importance. While today utilized by only a few extended family groups, from the early 1900s to the 1940s numerous families from throughout the watershed came to two lakes in particular for whitefish - Cunningham Lake and Whitefish Lake. For example, Whitefish Lake was recalled as a place where:

People packed out whitefish. Used birch bark toboggan sewed with willow. Took out 200 fish there with three or four dogs. Fort St. James people also went there before Christmas and Hallowe'en. Came back after one or two weeks.

Cunningham Lake has one of the most productive whitefish fisheries in the region. The original Portage village was located there (see below, Chapter 7), the Hudson's Bay Company established one of its fisheries there in 1827 (Morice 1904:131), and it provided a hedge against starvation for Indian groups in Fraser and Stuart Lakes. As recalled by the Tl'azt'enne:

People used to go to Cunningham Lake. Tachie people got whitefish there.

After the ice on Stuart Lake gets strong, in the winter, people from Tachie and Fort St. James come to trade clothes, tea, and other items, for whitefish.

Whitefish and char were also netted in the late fall while spawning in the reefs around the numerous islands in Stuart Lake. In the past, families camped out on the adjacent islands for two or three





weeks during the spawning runs, and dried the fish on site. However, most of the islands have been alienated from Indian control and summer cottages now take the place of smokehouses. Some of the lake's islands are Indian reserves, but the number is small. There remains, however, the notion of ownership of all islands, and these rights are reproduced within Tl'azt'enne society.

Pinchi Lake supports a kokanee (landlocked sockeye salmon) population, which has spawning runs in the creek between Stuart and Pinchi Lakes. Once an important food supply, its value has diminished in recent years because of high levels of mercury found in all fish supported by the Pinchi Lake system.

Like moose, fish is exchanged within the communities, following kinship lines. As noted above, villagers in Portage who lack access to salmon at the production level obtain it from kin in other villages. Some households on salmon runs produce for their relatives who lack this direct access. Part of household production also goes to feasts, sometimes associated with potlatches, but including farewell suppers for visitors, wedding banquets, and other informal gatherings.

### Trapping

The first interaction between Europeans and Carriers in the Nechako Plateau involved the exchange of furs and salmon for European commodities, and the fur trade has remained a part of the Tl'azt'enne way of life ever since. As indicated earlier, trapping as a full time occupation in the winter only became necessary, and possible, when the sockeye salmon component of the subsistence economy collapsed in the early 1900s, and both the value of furs and the ability of the



Hudson's Bay Company to bring in sufficient food supplies increased. Throughout the twentieth century, Tl'azt'enne families have maintained themselves by using a range of resources, including trapping fur bearing animals. But trapping by itself is not sufficient to provide an income on which a family can live. Trapping is best seen as one part of bush production and, like other bush resources, subject to periodic fluctuations in supplies and prices paid for furs. The Tl'azt'enne have moved in and out of commercial trapping in accordance with these variables, but trapping as a strategy has remained one of several means of obtaining food from the bush.

Trapping for fur bearing animals takes place at different locations in microenvironments in watersheds. Traps and snares are set along game paths and routes fur bearers take to water supplies. Some fur bearers are known as upland animals, while others remain in the valley floors. Thus, any trapper can opt for strategies which focus on obtaining a range of animals in different locations, or concentrating on one species. Some locations are discussed as 'beaver country', while others are renowned for other species.

The main fur bearer in Tl'azt'enne territory is beaver or ca. Muskrat, ček'et, is also common, but its lower price requires a high labour input for a low return. Less abundant, but remuneratively more rewarding, are several other fur bearers trapped through the winter: lynx, wasi; marten, čəni; mink tečəs; weasel, nobay; fisher, čəničə; wolverine, nustəl; wolf, yəs; coyote, čəntəti, and black bear, səs. As well as providing pelts, beaver and bear meat are eaten.

Trapping is carried out by trapping companies on registered traplines. 'Trapline' is somewhat of a misnomer, as areas, or territor-



ies, are defined instead of actual lines. The original trapping maps indicate lines running up creeks and other trapping areas, and the Tl'azt'enne discuss trapping in terms of the number and locations of actual lines in a particular region. However, the provincial government has rationalized the administration of trapping by delineating territories, which have map coordinates.

Like all resources, different Tl'azt'enne families have access to trapping areas of varying productivity and ease of access. Trapping, however, is only one part of the bush economy, and the term itself is often used as a shorthand for total resource use. A trapline is seen as a place where one can obtain moose, fish, and fur bearers. The Tl'azt'enne stressed that the bush was a food bank, one which stood between them and their complete dependence on the "White Man". In other words, bush resources meant the difference between domestic commodity production and proletarianization. As one Tl'azt'en explained:

My trapline is like money in the bank. When I need something, I just go out and get it.

Trapping situates the Tl'azt'enne physically and socially on the land; to go out trapping is to go out hunting and fishing. A trapping territory is a means of access to a resource area, even in the summer.

According to a 1975 study, there were over 230 traplines in the Nechako Plateau's Lakes District (Fraser Lake-Stuart Lake-Babine Lake-Burns Lake), with an average size of 300 square kilometres (Parris 1973:4). The Tl'azt'enne territory itself contains about 6,050 square kilometres.

Trapping itself does not constitute a major source of income for the Tl'azt'enne, and fur production cannot be measured as a commercial





enterprise. As noted above, trapping areas contain a range of resources. The Fish and Wildlife Branch of the government of British Columbia has indicated that Tl'azt'enne traplines are operated below the capacity of the region. The Tl'azt'enne, on the other hand, harvest furs as part of a range of resource activities. (See Appendix 3 for figures on resource use by a selected family group)

The Tl'azt'enne land base is decreasing as logging operations cut swathes through trapping lands. To accommodate this and a rising population, trapping groups have increased in size, although the actual number of males trapping may not have increased. Registration as a member of a trapping company gives an individual recognized rights to the territory, which may be as important as actually using the resources of the tract. Also, as trapping lands are alienated from Tl'azt'enne control and brought into logging production, compensation is paid by logging companies only to registered owners. Thus, for some it has become imperative to include all potential users on the trapping company list before the land is taken completely out of production.

The basic conflict between the two modes of production is revealed in correspondence between a logging company and a Carrier trapper in 1976. The trapper was informed by the company that it had received authorization to commence logging in an area which included his trapline, and wished to receive information about the locations of cabins, and other improvements. The trapper replied:

I do not wish any logging done in my trapline. Why is it that just when you people are going to log that you send a letter to me. I have lived and used that territory all my life and now my children are using it. I have cabins, traps and trails all over my trapline. When the traps are not used they are hung up on trees along the trapline trails. I do





not want these destroyed. That territory is like a suitcase full of money. When I need money I go to the suitcase, open it and take as much as I need. I see what logging has done to other people and their traplines. I don't want this to happen to my area. (Trapline Files, Stuart-Trembleur Lake Band Office)

The company's response reflect the ideological gap between the two modes of production:

I wish to assure you that it is not the policy of this company to ruin your or any body else's livelihood. To the contrary! We are providing a countless number of decent employment opportunities without prejudice in a number of communities. We encourage and help enterprising and business minded people to become independent contractors in the forest industry. We have demonstrated this time after time in the past few years. (Ibid.)

The correspondence above indicates the extent to which the bush economy remains invisible to industrial capitalism. However, to the Tl'azt'enne the rights to continue using bush resources flow from their relations of production.

#### Relations of Production in the Contemporary Bush Mode of Production

Land and its resources are genealogically referenced by the Carriers; production and exchange follow from demonstrable ties to ancestors and membership in local production and social groups. The preceeding section has described aspects of production; following is a description of the social framework within which production and exchange take place. Each person has access to different combinations of social and material resources. Some are common to all Tl'azt'enne, while others depend on links to particular ancestors. This framework provides what can be called the logic of social reproduction, and serves as a means of redistributing resources obtained from both the capitalist and bush modes of production. Rights to trapping territories especially follow social ties, emphasizing ancestral males.



The first trapping territories registered by Tl'azt'enne trappers occurred in 1927, one year after the provincial government made trap-line registration mandatory. One of the registrants indicated that he had been trapping on that line since 1877, and several other traplines registered in the next few years indicated trapping on particular lines dated to 1870, 1875, 1882, and 1885. Because of the low number of non-Indian trappers and settlers in the Stuart Lake watershed, it appears that nineteenth century trapping territories were retained to the period of registration. As the notion of 'trapping territory' incorporates general resource use, the areas mapped out in the late 1920s and early 1930s can be taken as an approximation of the traditional, or pre-contact, Tl'azt'enne resource use area.

The actual registration of trapping areas in the name of one person provided a baseline for subsequent inheritance and control of traplines. It also opens a controversy about the right of an individual in 1927 or 1928 to appropriate a territory which may have been used by a group prior to this. As one elderly Tl'azt'enne recalled about the teachings of her father, referring to about 1900:

That area was a free country before registration. The people of the village used to all hunt (trap) together. That's what my father told us about it. Said it was a free country to everybody. They could hunt and go everywhere. But after that, the government make that law. Then they have their own traplines.

Trapping prior to registration was carried out by patrilocal groups with extensive kinship ties to each other and to other members of adjacent local groups who, on the basis of these connections, could be invited to join the trapping. Trapping prior to registration was also controlled by local groups; local groups, in turn, were seen as 'families'. However, registration, and a host of other regulations



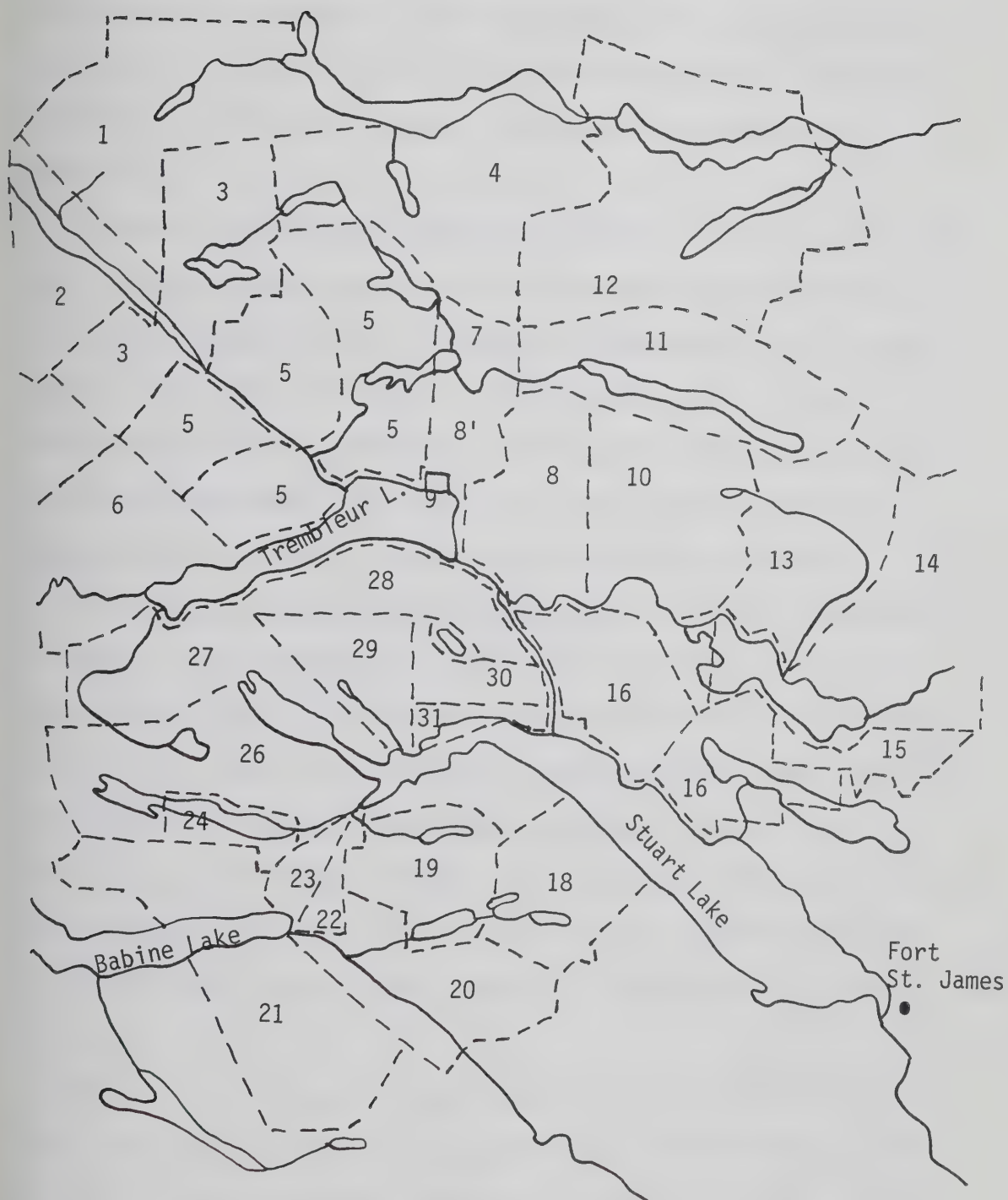
pertaining to the acquisition of bush resources, sought to invalidate prior relations of production and force the Tl'azt'enne to reorder social relations in terms of individual registrations of traplines. An examination of trapping records going back to the 1920s indicates that only two bands in British Columbia obtained band registrations: the Iskut Band and the Cariboo Hide Band, both in the northwestern section of the province. The local-kin group framework of resource use of the Tl'azt'enne was replaced by a formal, i.e., registered, relationship between an individual and a particular trapping territory. So while the present ideology stresses the openness of the pre-registration trapping system, its limits were defined by ties of kinship. The present trapping territories, thirty-one as of 1977, are indicated in Figure 11.

The basic unit of trapping production is the trapping 'company' - a formal association of males residing patrilocally who collectively own the trapping rights to a defined territory. The present trapping companies range from individual trappers to ones of six, seven, and eleven members. The life cycle of a trapping company usually starts with a male, who registers a trapline in his name. As his sons mature, they also become registered, and the company grows in size. At some point, the company might officially split, and some of the original trapping territory may be transferred to a new company formed by one of the sons who, in turn, eventually brings his sons in. Another strategy involves maintaining the territorial integrity of the original registration, but working out a rotating trapping in any one season. A man who does not have a direct male heir may bring in a son-in-law, but the emphasis is on direct male filial ties.





Figure 11 Tl'azt'enne Trapping Territories





At the basis of the trapping companies are two imperatives: one, that one traps on, and has special rights to, one's 'father's country', and two, that those brought into the trapping company should be relatives, or snatneku. To be a snatneku usually means that one must have a Tl'azt'enne father or, in other words, have a 'father's country'. (Examples of trapline transmissions are presented in Appendix 2).

Outside of the trapping companies discussed above, the other basic social and territorial groups of the Tl'azt'enne are local groups, or villages; patronymic groups; a bilateral kindred; matrilineal descent groups; Tl'azt'enne itself as a social category; and the Stuart-Trembleur Lake Band, a definition imposed by the federal government. Outside of these above categories fall other Carrier Indians, or Dake, Indians in general, and, finally, the Whites, or Nedoh.

Five villages make up the Stuart-Trembleur Lake Band, and members of these villages consider themselves to be Tl'azt'enne. However, those who have moved in or married in from another band or area may be referred to by their place of origin, and may consider themselves non-Tl'azt'enne. For example, some people presently residing in one of the villages moved from a northern area. While outsiders may consider all inhabitants of the villages as one of a kind, an internal differentiation is made between those who have or do not have Tl'azt'enne ancestors.

Three of the villages are small enough to be considered local kin groups, made up of related extended families. The other two villages are larger, and the internal composition is more complicated. Within these latter villages, houses are grouped around kin clusters, giving



in fact a series of social islands, replicating the structure of the smaller villages.

The ideal situation is to stay in the natal village of one's father, where one has rights to the resources in the immediate area. In this situation, the men would stay and women, as wives, would come from other local groups. The resident core of males then controls the use of local resources, but also has ties of exchange with other structurally similar local groups. In the sense that local group and 'father's group' approximate each other, local group exogamy is in effect 'father's group' exogamy, creating patrilocal groups.

Villages are seen as social units; each village, or village segment, is characterized as "just like a family". One person, though, is seen as the head of the village - usually the eldest male, or ədetčō. As one Tl'azt'en pointed out with respect to local group composition and the position of ədetčō:

There is just one ədetčō. He is the head of everyone. More like the boss of the village. In every village, someone has got to be ədetčō.

In most of the villages, everyone comes from one family. For example, in Grand Rapids it used to be the Austin family, Trembleur Lake used to be the Anatole family, and Portage used to Pius and Johnčō family.

The model which the Tl'azt'enne use to represent local groups is that of a patronymic group, approximating a patrilocal band. But the impact of changes in group composition is also recognized. An apical male starts the group, but when he dies his sons who remain there become the source of other patronymic groups. Over time, a single ancestor will be replaced in memory by his descendants, who in turn will be replaced. Also, males from other local groups may move in, after marrying one of the local women, and over time become the reference points for other patronymic groups.



Because of extensive exchange links with neighbouring local groups in the same watershed, a local group does not stand isolated socially or economically. In addition, other ties of kinship and descent integrate the local groups. Tl'azt'enne local groups can be seen as structurally similar to Radcliffe-Brown's (1952) description of Kariera hordes, in which a group of males possesses, occupies, and exploits a given territory. But the horde also shares surplus production with neighbouring hordes (Radcliffe-Brown 1952:34).

Radcliffe-Brown (1952:34) further maintained that: "The continuity of the horde is maintained by the continuity of the territory, which remains constant." More recently, Turner (1979) has proposed a two-fold model of hunting and gathering societies which focuses on whether or not access to resources occurs at the production or exchange levels, incorporating aspects of Radcliffe-Brown's model. Asch (1979a) and Turner and Wertman (1977) present examples of sub-arctic groups in which the band collectively owns resources in its territory, and all members gain access to resources through direct production. The Kariera and other Australian bands represent an alternative, in which local groups control resources and other local groups gain access only through exchange (Turner 1979) - a situation similar to the Tl'azt'enne. Following Radcliffe-Brown (1952:34), we can interpret the continuity of Tl'azt'enne local groups as an outcome of their continued occupation of their aboriginal territory and their continued reliance on subsistence production from that same territory.

Lee (1972) and Lee and DeVore (1968) have attempted to make the bilateral band the basic model of hunting and gathering societies,





refuting Radcliffe-Brown's (1952) horde. For example, Lee (1972:1) commented:

The rigid territorial model of hunter social groups, epitomized by Radcliffe-Brown's Australian horde, has been superseded by a more flexible grouping frequently changing in size and composition ... Furthermore the flexible group can be shown to possess certain adaptive advantages over the more rigid patrilocal form ...

In their introduction to Man the Hunter, Lee and DeVore (1968:8) wrote that the articles in the volume:

... make it clear that the hunter-gatherer band is not a corporation of persons who are bound together by the necessity of maintaining property. A corporation requires two conditions: a group of people must have some resource to incorporate about and there must be some means of defining who is to have rights over this resource. Among most hunter-gatherers one or both of these conditions is lacking.

For the Carriers, both conditions are met. The alternative model, as represented by the Tl'azt'enne, sees the control of the means of production by local groups matched by an exchange system which explicitly links production groups, none of which by itself can survive. It is not a question of one system being more or less flexible than another, but rather given certain modes of production, how relations between groups are realized. One of the strongest proponents of the bilateral model, Helm (1965:381), argued that "recurring disaster ... would seem to require that Dene social organization allow multiple kinship avenues to group affiliation." Instead of disaster underlying Dene social structure, it is useful to ask how recurrent resource fluctuations are handled at the social and technological levels. Thus, Tl'azt'enne society cannot be seen as a direct consequence of adaptations to the structure of the resource base, but rather a mode of production based on the local control of necessary means of production, with structured exchange relations which can be



used to gain access to the resources of others who face the same problem of maintaining control of production. Local groups are linked through ties of kinship and the clan-potlatch system.

### Bilateral Kindred

The Tl'azt'enne recognize a category of relatives, called snatneke (singular), or snatneku (plural), and it is within this category that trapline transfers are made and production groups formed. Because of the social and territorial continuity of the Tl'azt'enne, it is axiomatic to note that most, if not all, villagers are related. However, distinctions are made within the larger community. Some people are recognized simply as relatives, or snatneku. Within this category, some are distant relatives, or uasnatən, while others are close relatives, or susnatən, or susnatneku. Those in the 'close relative' category can use sibling terms for each other (sərtəzke, brother; səttətsInke, sister), which in turn means that they are the children of one's əstay (father's brother), agi (mother's sister), əze (mother's brother), and əbizyan (father's sister).

The kinship terminology may have been partly influenced by Roman Catholic prohibitions on cousin marriages, except with special permission. Morice (1910:988), for example, indicates that sibling terms were used for patrilineal parallel and cross-cousins, while 'cousin' terms applies to matrilineal cousins. As noted earlier, Morice's writings are often confusing and contradictory, and published at a time when he was actively trying to change Carrier society. However, the above notes suggest that the sibling terms were used for those with whom one grew up in one's father's village (or at least came from one's father's village - for example,



father's sister), while 'cousin' terms were applied to those who came from another village. More recently, sibling terms have been extended horizontally to encompass all parallel and cross-cousins, who fall into the category of prohibited spouse.

Snatneku is a flexible category, especially beyond susnatən, or those defined as close relatives, and associations between kin in this category depend on a range of events and personal preferences.

A similar group has been described by Goldman (1940) in his study of the Alkatcho Carrier, to the south of the Tl'azt'enne. Goldman (1940:334) indicates that an Alkatcho local group was often co-extensive with what he transcribed as a sadeku, or an extended family group based on a sibling core. Sibling terms were used for all sadeku members of the same generation - in other words, all members of a local group would be classificatory siblings. Goldman (1940:354) also noted that a sadeku was referenced to a common ancestor, and included all descendants from a grandfather. The sadeku also utilized a common trapping territory (Goldman 1940:335).

This suggests that the Tl'azt'enne category snatneku has functional equivalents elsewhere. Given an apical male ancestor, both male and female links can be used to claim ancestry and, as a result, gain access to the resource area of the founding male. While the snatneku relates to production and the formation of production groups, another framework is reproduced to involve all of the community in an on-going system of reciprocal obligations - the clan system. The clan system in turn serves as the structural framework for potlatching. It is through obligations maintained in the clan-potlatch system that items from the Carrier bush mode of production and the capitalist mode of





production, including the industrial and state sectors, are redistributed in the community. Money, clothing, appliances, hardware, store food, and bush food are exchanged, along with labour, to fulfill obligations which are created and maintained through the clan-potlatch system.

Like the snatneku, clans cross-cut local groups, and ensure that multiple avenues to resources from both modes of production are maintained. Once associated with the control of salmon weirs, clans presently serve an exchange function.

### Clans

Like some other Athapaskan groups, the Tl'azt'enne possess matrilineal descent groups, which for the sake of convenience can be called clans. And, as with the other groups, the presence of unilineal descent groups has been the source of an extended debate in anthropology (cf. Helm 1976:39-41). Athapaskanists are divided into two camps on this issue: some opt for an underlying matrilineal descent structure, which was retained by some groups, but disappeared among those who adapted to the subarctic region east of the Cordillera (cf. Krech 1978). The majority, however, assume that the system was borrowed from coastal groups, and never diffused beyond those Athapaskans who were in close contact with the Pacific coast (cf. de Laguna 1975), leaving the bilateral band as the basic form of Athapaskan social organization (Helm 1965, 1968).

Morice (1892) was the first to argue that Carrier descent groups and potlatching were borrowed from the coast. This was reiterated by Steward (1941a, 1941b, 1955) who argued that the resource base of the Carriers was sufficiently productive that they could adopt the north-



west coast 'moiety-potlatch' system. Its lack of integration into the productive core of Carrier society also meant to Steward that this complex could be removed without serious problems; Steward (1941a, 1941b) wrote that by 1940, the Carriers had lost potlatching and the descent system.

However, detailed studies of the role of potlatching and descent among Athapaskans has shown its importance in defining rights and relations between resources and people (See above; also see Balikci, 1963; McKennan 1965, 1969; Guedon 1974; Osgood 1936). The operation of potlatching and matrilineal descent today among the Tl'azt'enne mollifies Steward's assertions, but also raises the question about the contemporary structure and functions of this complex, particularly as a means of articulation between the capitalist and bush modes of production.

A set of reciprocal obligations between members of the Tl'azt'enne community is reproduced through and with the potlatch-clan structure. Drawing on the resources of all the community, the system serves to emphasize the collectivity of the Tl'azt'enne at the exchange level. As one person described it: "This is our welfare system." Unlike the situation in the nineteenth century, clans no longer regulate access to the means of production. However, through potlatching, food and services become available to all members of the community; the domestic economy produces for the community, and household resources are redistributed.

The structure of the system can be analyzed at two levels: the ideal and how it actually operates. Underlying the system is the need to maintain the structure, which in this case consists of three descent groups.



The Tl'azt'enne have three, named, matrilineal descent groups. In functional terms, it is more appropriate to consider them potlatch, or exchange groups, as indicated below. The Tl'azt'enne themselves refer to these groups by a variety of terms - societies (the most commonly used term), clans, companies, tribes, and bands. Members of the same clan are to'h hadidoh, literally 'one of a kind'.

Each clan has a name, and property which is displayed during potlatches (colour, crests, song, dance, and one or more deneza, or clan names). The clans have Tl'azt'enne and English names, as follows:

ṭcaməṣu, or Polywilson, represented by the colour black and a beaver crest; grantən (no English term, although grantən was likely derived from the name of the railway south of Stuart Lake, Grand Trunk (cf. Steward 1960:738)), with red, white, and blue colours and two crests: dambalas (meaning unknown) and grouse; and lIsIlyu, or Japan, with white for its colour and a frog crest. A fourth clan, lačibu, wolf, was introduced into one of the villages in the 1950s when an extended family with this clan moved down from Takla Lake. As one Tl'azt'enne explained, though: "Not enough lačibu here yet, so they usually go with lIsIlyu." Thus, while four clans are present, the structure operates with three.

The triadic structure, plus Morice's (1910:988) mention of Carrier matrilineal cross-cousin marriage suggests a generalized exchange system. However, no adequate ethnographic data supports this. The very presence of the structure in the nineteenth century remains somewhat of a paradox. While Morice has consistently presented strong evidence to show their existence (and which is accepted here), the fur trade journals never mention matrilineal descent (or its nineteenth





century equivalent - 'mother right'). Instead, the accounts present information on the ownership of tracts by 'families'. Morice's accounts, however, allow the gap to be filled.

The descent groups have a shallow genealogical depth, with no apical or mythological ancestors/ancestresses. An individual belongs to his mother's 'society', not that of an identifiable ancestor. But one could be sponsored into another clan, and there are several examples of individuals switching to their father's clan or, in some cases, belonging to both the mother's and the father's clans.

Several people emphasized that although one was born into one's mother's clan (or society), there was a possible shift to another clan, if acceptable:

We go by the mother unless the father takes them back. That's the only time they get a different band (clan). Some belong to their mother and their father; they both take them over at the same time - double header.

You are born on your mother's side. But you can be potlatched to your father's side or society.

There are few examples of persons with dual clan affiliation, but several recorded instances of clan shifts, mostly to a father's or grandfather's clan. Of fourteen transfers, six were from lIsIlyu to ʔcəməšu, four from lIsIlyu to grantən, two from ʔcəməšu to lIsIlyu, one from ʔcəməšu to grantən, and one from grantən to ʔcəməšu. From these transactions, lIsIlyu lost ten and gained two (total of -8), ʔcəməšu lost three and gained seven (total of +4), and grantən lost one and gained five (total of +4). For the total Tl'azt'en population, the distribution of people in each clan is about one-third, although local groups vary in composition. For example, because Portage is basically a single extended family, most of the adult males





are in one clan, lIsIlyu, derived from their mother. One son, however, has been transferred to grantən, the clan of his father. In his analysis of clan exogamy at Fort St. James, Steward (1960:740) found that of ten marriages of ṭcəməšū nobles, four were with local women of the same clan, four with local lIsIlyu women, and two with Stoney Creek women of no apparent clan affiliation (Steward may mean Nautley, instead of Stoney Creek, as his map erroneously places Stoney Creek at the outlet of Fraser Lake, where Nautley is located). Steward (1960:740) further commented that: "Marriages of nobles elsewhere near Stuart Lake show a similar lack of consistent exogamy either by noble group or locality." But Steward (and Morice) does not mention the transfer of people between clans, especially to one's father's clan to 'take his place'. I take such a transfer to be part of the aboriginal social system, and a necessary mechanism to overcome problems of differential clan productivity (in terms of biological reproduction). It is not surprising that traditional concepts of exogamy and lineality break down when faced with the actual operation of Carrier 'clans'; it is, however, this very flexibility that allows the Carriers to reproduce a clan system. Also, in a matrilineal descent system, a man transfers his property (if it is defined as clan property) to a sister's son, or some other member of his clan (Morice (1893) is adamant that the Carrier system worked like this in fact). With a formal means of transferring one's son to one's clan, a trapline, for example, can be transferred to a son who is also a member of one's own clan in a matrilineal system. Some of the transfers recorded were to a grandfather's clan; this also allows property to pass to a direct or lineal male descendant in a matri-



lineal system (see Beattie 1964:129). If a woman transfers, her children retain the affiliation of her original clan. One woman who was transferred commented on the process:

My sisters, they're all liSilyu, but my brother, me, and my father, we're grantən. My mother was liSilyu. My father took my brother and me into his society. I don't know why. Have to spend lots of money when the father does that. grantən put on a potlatch to take me in when I was small. The father takes out of the mother's side.

The clans are not exogamous, although it was suggested that 'long ago' they were - along with those bilaterally related from a common grandfather in a category called snatneku, "my relatives". It was also suggested that although clan exogamy is not required, clan endogamy creates problems for potlatching because the husband and wife are in the same clan or society, or, as it was expressed: "Just one side all the time." Through potlatching, the distinctions between clans are reproduced and in an ideal representation of the structure, husband and wife are on different 'sides', i.e., as host and guest. Clan endogamy merges this affinal distinction and endangers the exchange structure.

Rosman and Rubel (1971) have a model of northwest coast potlatching which stressed that potlatching was a manifestation of exchange between groups already linked in marriage; i.e., between affines. Thus the host-guest distinction was basically one of affinal opposition. This distinction is implied in Carrier accounts of potlatching, as is clan exogamy as a means to maintain the affinal opposition in potlatching. An account of Gitksan potlatching by Adams (1974) is also similar to the Carriers. In Adams' account, the transfer of personnel from clans with large numbers of people to those with small numbers was necessary in order to both maintain the structure,



and thus potlatching, and also to remove potential claimants on clan estates. However, Gitksan potlatching reproduces a system in which titles, and thus control of productive areas linked to those titles, are owned. While the possession of a certain title enables one to be considered a deneza, there is presently a clear separation between the possession of a title among the Tl'azt'enne and any relationship of that title to control over productive resources. Past ethnographic accounts, however, clearly indicate that the system operated much like that described by Adams for the Gitksan.

The notion of clan control can be either a consequence of actual control by clans or an expression of control by a person who also has a deneza name.

There are suggestions that deneza control of resource areas was ended by direct intervention by priests; Morice (1930:115-116), for example, wrote of his role in the late 1800s in handing out parcels of land to heads of families, and the transfer of traplines within the present system of registration clearly favours patrilineal relationships. The issue of whether or not the traditional social system operated as Morice described it is moot. Because of the nature of the system today and the small population with which the system had to operate in the past, I am inclined to believe that unilineal descent systems in general, and this one in particular, operated with a great deal more ambiguity than accepted, regardless of the perfection of the model, emic or etic. With this approach, one can accept the logic (and flexibility) of the presence of a unilineal descent system in a hunting-trapping-fishing Athapaskan-speaking population.





The question of deneza powers was commented on by several people; the role of deneza was relegated to clan functions, which in contemporary terms mean potlatching and associated exchange activities.

No deneza in Portage. They don't like it; they don't agree with it. But there used to be deneza in Tachie. They lead their societies. Deneza was just boss in ceremonies, not trapping lands. Have to ask deneza before they do anything, and deneza has to say yes. Like people, they meet to do something, what to put up (in a potlatch). Potlatch, or something like that. Take idea to deneza.

Matrilineal descent cannot be taken as the blueprint for Carrier society; the jural dimensions of clans are limited, and represent only one component in a larger social formation. As was expressed by one person: "It doesn't matter about the companies because we're all related." In other words, the distinctions made between kin by clans are recognized as just that - divisions between related people for ceremonial and reciprocal exchange purposes. The descent system gives form to exchange obligations between members of the various clans, but does not function as relations of production.

As indicated above, Tl'azt'enne clans can best be seen in functional terms as exchange, or potlatch groups, for it is through a series of reciprocal exchanges, culminating in a ceremony known as a potlatch, or batlač, that the operation of the clans appears. The clans are elements in a system of reciprocal exchanges which start at the death of a member of one of the clans. Members of the other two clans then perform a series of services for the clan of the deceased - sending messages of the death, digging the grave, preparing the corpse, erecting the tombstone, and other activities. The erection of a tombstone signals the end of that particular series of exchanges. But then the clan of the deceased is obligated to pay those who



provided the services. This is done at a potlatch, which also translates into English as "payback".

As a Tl'azt'en explained the system:

If a Granton person dies, then all Granton chip in for burial expenses. Bury him, then set date to pay up. One person is appointed in charge of money, then pay for everything.

There's three different societies. When they put up a potlatch - different societies. Like us, if we're going to put up a potlatch - just us.

As well as paying clans back for services rendered, potlatches are a means whereby a person changes clans, or assumes a title, or clan name. These, though, often are part of the first type of potlatch, as an heir assumes his/her father's/mother's title or clan affiliation.

In a formal sense, the clan of a deceased person presents a potlatch to pay back members of the other two clans for services they performed. Money and foodstuffs are generated from within the first clan. But the distinctions between clans disappear during the collection of material to be distributed, a consequence of both the cost of putting up a potlatch and the limited number of people within a potlatch group or clan. Thus, while the actual potlatch ceremony differentiates between host and guest clans through the distribution of monies and goods, the collection of material involved the villages of the Stuart Lake basin. Some examples of potlatches are as follows:

A potlatch was held in 1975 at Portage for three males who had died in the winter after going through the ice on Stuart Lake. All the deceased belonged to the lIsIlyu clan so at the potlatch lIsIlyu was host and grantən and ṭcəməšū were guests. The purpose of the potlatch was to pay back those who had searched for the bodies, dug the graves, obtained the coffin, sewed and cooked at the wake, and so on.



Another potlatch in 1974 also involved a deceased lIsIlyu man, and the same structure as above applies. Several steps were involved prior to the potlatch, and the division of labour indicates the social differentiation between kin caused by clans. The body was retrieved from a distant town by the deceased man's brother, who is in the ɽcəməʃu clan. His sister, the deceased man's wife, however, is grantən, due to the fact that he took the place of his grandfather in ɽcəməʃu. After the return, the body was washed and dressed by several older males, all of different clans than the deceased. A coffin was purchased and brought back from the same distant town by the deceased's son, who is grantən. The grave was dug and a grave box was made (by two ɽcəməʃu men). All those who helped were paid back at the potlatch held later; payment is in money, while everyone who is in attendance receives a small hamper of store food. Later, a headstone was erected. One year after the potlatch, gifts, or souvenirs, were distributed to those who were involved. These gifts include clocks, toasters, and other items purchased from stores in nearby towns.

There were several other potlatches planned or carried out during the research period, but they all share the same fundamental characteristics. It is evident that the death of a member of the community sets in motion a series of exchanges of material objects and services. The clans are the vehicles in which these are carried out, and the whole system is reproduced through matrilineal descent. Services and various clan members are recorded by someone designated to that task so they may be paid back at a potlatch, and the 'pay-back' aspect of potlatching is certainly one of its more visible attributes. But potlatching itself is an event which reproduces the





clan structure and its exchange obligations by emphasizing the function of clans in the exchange system. In his account of the end of clans and potlatching, Steward (1941) emphasized their function, not structure. The use of clans to delineate land ownership is no longer evident, but a structure is reproduced, and through the reproduction of this structure an exchange system is maintained which draws on resources of the capitalist and bush modes of production.

This system ensures that individual and household labour and commodities enter the larger community. Through reciprocal obligations, everyone contributes to a potlatch. Labour is expended on raising a tombstone for the deceased of another clan, and store food (like a box of canned milk) is donated to the clan giving a potlatch. The clan - potlatch system reproduces a system of reciprocity, and ensures that commodities and bush food are redistributed beyond the nuclear family.

Most of the people marrying into one of the Tl'azt'en villages already have a clan affiliation; those who do not are brought into one of the groups. An interesting example concerns a coastal woman who married into Portage, and was able to compare the social system she was brought up in with that of the Carriers. She was originally placed in ṭcəməš, then transferred to lIsilyu when someone in that clan died. Her daughter, married to her husband's brother's son, is also in lIsilyu. From her perspective Carrier clans differ in several ways from those in her natal village on the northern northwest coast. According to her, clans on the coast are exogamous; here they are not. There is no custom here of "putting up a table", i.e., setting up a table with dry goods to be distributed, along with the trapline of the





deceased (Food is distributed at Carrier potlatches, as are personal effects of the deceased. Adams (1974) emphasizes the control of trapping areas by clans, which agrees with the above comments; the Carrier have clearly separated clans from traplines). Food is given away at Carrier potlatches, not like at the coast (the consumption of food is an integral part of coastal potlatches - see Rosman and Rubel (1971); however, each person attending a Carrier potlatch receives a hamper of store food to take away). Finally, she noted that the money to pay for potlatching here comes from everyone, while at the coast, the money is generated from within the clan. This is recognized as an ideal among the Tl'azt'enne, but so also is the fact that the sums of money required are too much for the small clans. But regardless of the source of goods and money, a potlatch is performed in the name of a single clan. The blurring of clan boundaries at one level is clarified at another, and the structure within which potlatching has a meaning is reproduced. Whereas in the previous century, potlatching served as a means by which deneza validated titles, and thus rights to resources, it now provides a framework within which resources produced by domestic groups and patrilocal trapping groups are redistributed.

#### The Tl'azt'enne and the Stuart-Trembleur Lake Band

The Tl'azt'enne today are the descendants of the Tl'azt'enne who occupied the Stuart Lake watershed prior to contact in 1806. They trace their origins to one of the villages now part of the Stuart-Trembleur Lake Band, but the social definition is not coextensive with the political definition.

Tl'azt'enne is an internal definition for a number of village groups, and their ancestors and descendants. As noted earlier,



Tl'azt'enne means 'people at the head of the lake'. It also refers to those who have a Tl'azt'enne 'father's country' and snatneku.

Tl'azt'enne presently live in the Stuart Lake area, Prince George, Vancouver, and Edmonton.

Stuart-Trembleur Lake Band, however, refers to a definition established by the federal Department of Indian Affairs, and includes some who lack 'father's country'/snatneku, while excluding some who have them. In formal terms, a band member is a person whose name has been entered on the band list. Under the provisions of the Indian Act, status Indian women who marry non-status Indians or simply males who do not have Indian status lose their status. Thus, a Tl'azt'en might not be a legal member of the band.

For exchange purposes, though, the most important categories are the ones discussed above: 'father's country', snatneku, and clans.

#### Reproducing the Bush Mode of Production

The frameworks within which production and exchange take place have been discussed above. It has been argued that the bush economy represents a practical and socially necessary part of a mode of production which is articulated with, and ultimately dominated by, industrial capitalism. However, there are limits to the extent to which the bush economy can be reproduced.

Economically, hunting, trapping, and fishing are interconnected with wage labour and transfer payments (that is, money received from family allowance, old age pension, and so on). Money from wage labour and transfer payments goes to purchase the technology required to maintain the bush economy (for example, wood for boats, engines, gas, guns, ammunition, trucks, and so on). In turn, products from the bush



enter the market as commodities. For example, furs are traded for cash, and moose hides are worked in to moccasins and other leather goods. However, as the preceeding chapters indicate, the framework within which production and exchange takes place differs from capitalism. While domestic groups are capable of maintaining their existence, extensive kin ties and the clan-potlatching system link production units together in an on-going series of reciprocal exchanges in which bush resources and commodities (including commercially produced food and technology) are redistributed.

The band itself administers a budget which reached about \$700,000 in 1977-78. However, the cost of translating the input from the bush economy into dollar values is difficult and perhaps misleading. At the risk of misrepresenting the social and cultural significance of the bush economy, I estimate that about \$5,000 of cash income for a family stretches into a wage-labour equivalent of \$10,000 to \$12,000 when the use of bush resources is included. Therefore, even given involvement in wage labour and income earned through transfer payments, the bush economy represents a way of adapting to the overall marginal position of the Tl'azt'enne to industrial capitalism.

The limits to the bush economy are a function of capitalist penetration of the region and use of the land for logging and other industrial purposes. Overall, there has been a decrease in the land base on which the Tl'azt'enne can draw, plus increased pressure on available resources from non-Indian hunters and fishermen. The bush economy cannot expand because its harvest depends on simple technology, extensive use of labour, and levels of natural reproduction of subarctic species which are incapable of the kind of involution





described by Geertz (1963) for Indonesian rice production. Trapping especially is limited by a finite land base.

The bush economy has been stabilized to some extent by cash incomes from transfer payments which can be used to renew the necessary bush technology, and has reduced for many the need to seasonally enter the labour market (which, as indicated earlier, has no need of Indian labour). The other stabilizing factor has been population movement away from the reserves, a pattern not limited to this band. An estimated one-third of B.C.'s status Indian population resides off the reserves.

The Carrier people have attempted to collectively control production in their land. For example, in 1960, Indians of the Stuart Lake Agency requested a Tree Farm Licence:

The Stuart Lake Agency Indians mainly engage in timber work and trapping for their livelihood. With the advent of the mills in this area and the influx of settlers, their trapping privileges are fast disappearing, and it is requested that timber in the form of a Tree Farm Licence be given to them, with non-Indians brought in to teach them the management of such enterprises, under government financing through loans, until the Indians are capable of looking after such business ventures themselves. (Supplementary Brief Submitted by the Aboriginal Native Rights Regional Committee of the Interior Tribes of British Columbia, Joint Committee on Indian Affairs 1960:616)

In 1981, the Stuart-Trembleur Lake Band made application for a timber harvesting licence for an area within their traditional territory, receiving it in 1982. However, as indicated elsewhere, the region's timber production has been largely committed to large corporations which operate with vertically integrated companies.

In 1974, Carrier trappers attempted to form an organization to market furs. Out of this effort came the Carrier Indians Trappers Association, directed by the chiefs in the district. This organization, however, dissolved because of a lack of long term funding.



### Summary

Like most northern Athapaskan groups, the Tl'azt'enne harvest bush resources with a mixture of traditional and industrial techniques and tools. Steel traps and nylon line have replaced wood deadfalls and willow traps, but the ecological imperatives of northern resources still underlie the seasonal round of activities. Into this have been fitted income-producing activities.

Bush resources are harvested primarily for food and secondarily as a cash crop, and form the basis of household economies. However, while not dependent on commodity production for cash, the Tl'azt'enne require income-producing activities to purchase store food, technology for use in the bush economy, and an assortment of other items. Income comes from a variety of sources, but especially from wage labour and transfer payments. Each household has access to both cash and bush resources from several sources, including exchange. Commodities purchased from the market place and derived from the bush are distributed in the community through inter-household exchanges, feasts, and potlatches.

Kinship connections and clan membership provide the framework for production and exchange in the bush economy. But goods obtained from both the capitalist and bush modes of production flow along kinship lines and are redistributed during ceremonies. The potlatch, especially, serves as a means of redistributing products derived from the industrial economy. Thus, instead of isolating individuals from the community, wage labour provides another resource for use in potlatching and for meeting reciprocal kinship obligations. The Tl'azt'enne villages are involved in an on-going system of reciprocal



obligations in which labour, goods, and food are constantly in circulation.

Village residence and membership in trapping companies provide the framework for access to resources at the production level. The trapping companies especially control rights to the use of particular resources in defined areas. By using apical male ancestors as reference points in validating rights to these tracts, the trapping companies reproduce a non-capitalist form of land tenure. This contrasts with the nineteenth century clan-deneza system.

Finally, an extensive network of affinal and consanguineal connections links all of the Carrier villages in the Stuart Lake watershed; additional ties connect Carrier settlements in adjacent watersheds. This informal exchange community ensures that most Tl'azt'enne have access to the resources of related households in the region, and that resources can be shifted to accommodate shortages or surpluses. While material changes have altered the former land tenure system, structured around clans and deneza, traditional activities continue to function in the present society. Potlatching, especially, has changed from a means for the deneza to validate control over resources to a redistributive function, drawing on resources from several sources.

Patrilocal trapping groups have emerged as the primary resource-owning unit, replacing the matrilineally-based deneza system. The social structure of one of these patrilocal communities is described in greater detail below.

The following chapter shows the progressive incorporation of the Tl'azt'enne into mercantile and industrial capitalism, and the role of the bush economy and exchange relations, from the perspective of a single village, Portage.





## Chapter 7 The Social History of a Carrier Village

### Portage

The social and economic history of the Tl'azt'enne village of Portage, or Yekutče, recapitulates general Tl'azt'enne general Tl'azt'enne social history, the articulation with capitalism, and the emergence of a patrilocal group. In the late 1800s, the village stood at the crossroads of a major supply route and entry point into the interior of the province. Today, the same area can only be reached by aircraft or boat and appears to be lost in time, on the margin of Candian society. Yet its marginality today is a result of capitalism. With a shift from mercantile to industrial capitalist uses of the Nechako Plateau, villages such as Portage lost their utility. Indian labour was no longer required to transport supplies and once productive fisheries became unnecessary for the Hudson's Bay Company's operations. Nonetheless, the apparent isolation of Portage is deceiving - all of its inhabitants have worked for the Hudson's Bay Company or one of numerous sawmills, and their present mode of production, involving hunting, trapping, and fishing is a consequence of the reorganization of the timber industry in the region in the mid-1960s and the infusion of transfer payments. As one villager succinctly stated the process:

I worked in the sawmills in Fort St. James in the 1960s.  
I came back to Portage when the sawmills shut down.





The village is located near the head of Stuart Lake, at the west end of a portage, or trail, which connects Stuart and Babine Lakes. It contains about 85 people, living in fifteen houses, with a small store run by one of the villagers, a school and teacherage (built in 1976), a church (built in 1896), a priest's house, health clinic, several barns, numerous smokehouses, and thirty-three cattle and horses.

The villagers utilize the resources of several watersheds: the head of Stuart Lake, the head of Babine Lake and adjacent river valley, and the Cunningham Lake basin, which drains into Stuart Lake. In this area, they fish for salmon, whitefish, and char; hunt moose; trap fur bearing animals; and raise hay and vegetables. In addition to Portage, smaller camps of several cabins and smokehouses are situated on Babine and Cunningham Lakes.

The main village in this area was originally located at Cunningham Lake, the site of a fish weir and a productive whitefish fishery. The inhabitants gradually shifted to the present location at the head of Stuart Lake in the 1880s, while maintaining houses and smokehouses at the former location. The original site was known at various times as Petit Lac, Yekoh Lake, and Yokogh Lake (the Tl'azt'enne term is yekoh):

- 1825 - "Two of the Yokogh Indians came in with 990 salmon"  
- "Pinchi and Yokogh Indians traded 2620 salmon."
- 1831 - "Most of the Yokogh and Pinchee Indians returned to their camps." (HBCA B.188/a/17, fo. 34)
- 1834 - Indians at Little Lake of Babine Portage. (HBCA D.4/126, fo. 37d)
- 1840 - "From the Portage Indians we learn they have a good stock of White Fish." (HBCA B.188/a/19, fo. 13d)



The importance of the whitefish fishery for both the Hudson's Bay company and other Carrier populations is also indicated. As noted earlier, the Hudson's Bay Company established a fishery there in 1827 (Morice 1904:131), and the following comments were recorded in the Fort St. James journal in 1831:

- 1831 - "We have no prospects of any fishery unless something can be done at Yokogh Lake." (August 24, 1831, HBCA B.188/a/17, fo. 18d)
- Hudson's Bay Company men returned from Yokogh Lake with 12,000 whitefish (December 17, 1831, HBCA B.188/a/17, fo. 33)
- "Several Fraser Lake Indians were there (Yokogh Lake) ... it being the only place where they can get any fish to save themselves from famine." (December 17, 1831, HBCA B.188/a/17, fo. 33)

A surveyor left the following description of the Indian fishery in December, 1872 (Horetzky 1874:86-87):

Came upon a large camp of Indians who were catching the finest trout and whitefish I ever saw. They had thousands of them hung up on poles to dry. Their primitive and open lodges, the long rows of fish in the successive stages of desiccation, the half naked children sprawling about in the snow, the dogs too fat and lazy to move, and the numerous dugouts or canoes hauled up on the beach. This lake was encircled by high hills, and the portion of it which we had come over, washard and fast for the winter; while just here it was perfectly open and free from ice.

Seven years later, the economy had diversified to include agriculture and stock-raising:

An Indian on the portage between the two lakes (Stuart and Babine) cultivates a little patch of land, and though very poorly attended to, he had a fine looking crop of potatoes and a little field of barley ... At the date of our visit (July 4, 1879). He also keeps some cattle here, cutting hay for them in swamps about the river mouth. (Dawson 1881:29B)

A wagon-road, fit for ox-carts, connects the two lakes, and the country on either side affords good pasture. We were surprised to find, at the head of Steward Lake, a well-stocked farm, owned and worked by the Indian "tyhee", or chief, who raised excellent cattle, as well as good crops of hay and vegetables, lives in a cottage, and wears an air of respectability. (Gordon 1880:117; date July 3, 1879)



Towards the end of the nineteenth century, a settlement began to develop at the present site of Portage. As one Tl'azt'en explained the movement:

Portage had no houses, just a landing to travel to Cunningham Lake, Whitefish Lake, and Babine Lake. Then one old couple, Adam and his wife, built the first smoke house. Then others started to build smokehouse, then log houses.

Between 1907 and 1911, land in the area had been pre-empted by the Hudson's Bay Company, the Oblates, and several settlers. However, no long term non-Indian settlement emerged.

The area, however, was important to the Hudson's Bay Company. As noted above, it established a fishery at Cunningham Lake in 1827. Earlier, in 1822, a post had been established on Babine Lake to obtain salmon and furs, and the annual traffic in these products to Stuart Lake made the portage between Stuart and Babine Lakes an important route for the next 75 years. Traffic increased in the 1880s when the Hudson's Bay Company began bringing supplies up the Skeena River by paddle wheeler to Hazelton, then over to Fort St. James via Babine and Stuart Lakes. Warehouses were erected at both ends of the portage in 1884, and a sloop stationed on each lake to haul supplies. The importance of this mode of transportation ended with the completion of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway in 1914, and Portage's importance to the fur trade ended.

The economic history of the area indicates the fluctuations in employment opportunities. Prior to 1900, the Hudson's Bay Company was the major employer, as Tl'azt'enne packed supplies over the portage or served as crew on one of the two sloops. The oldest man in the village recalled working on the HBC scows, loading supplies.





The next source of wage labour came in 1908, with the establishment of a fish hatchery along the creek which drains Cunningham Lake, and its presence attracted Carriers from other parts of the Stuart Lake watershed. Again, the oldest male indicated that he had moved to Portage from Trembleur Lake partly because of employment at the hatchery.

In 1913, the sockeye salmon fishery in Stuart Lake collapsed, and Carriers from Stuart Lake shifted fishing operations to Babine Lake. Between 1908 and 1917, the population of Portage increased from 16 to 43, while Tachie, Pinche, Grand Rapids, and Necoslie declined a total of 41 people. In other words, the salmon crisis precipitated a population expansion in Portage. Until the return of sufficient salmon in Stuart Lake in the 1940s and the expansion of wage labour during the same period, annual treks to Babine Lake were necessary. As Portage villagers recalled:

Fort St. James people used to come to Babine to make salmon. We used to bring them across the portage by wagon - \$10 a trip. We didn't take it all in cash - maybe a new blanket. Mostly barter things.

Long time ago, Necoslie people used to come up to Cunningham Lake to fish and hunt, and to Babine for salmon.

The round of economic activities in the 1920s and 1930s involved a combination of fishing, haying, trapping, and trading. In the fall and winter, families stayed at Cunningham Lake in cabins, hunting and fishing at whitefish spawning reefs. They stayed until Christmas, and then hauled the fish down to Portage when the ice was strong enough. After Stuart Lake froze sufficiently, Carriers from Tachie and Fort St. James came over to trade clothes, tea, and other commodities, for whitefish. After spring breakup, fish traps were set at Cunningham



Lake for suckers and char. In the summer, gardens were tended and hay cut. Haying extended into the fall, along with salmon fishing at Babine Lake.

In the 1930s, Portage people trapped until spring. Winter trips across the ice to Tachie and Fort St. James were made with horse-drawn sleighs in order to sell furs. Trapping ended in May, when the fur turned curly. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, vegetables and cattle were sold to a freighter who supplied the mines operating in the region. Scows hauling mining supplies up the Stuart Lake watershed were manned by Indian crews. Most Tl'azt'enne moved to Pinchi Lake in the early 1940s to work for the newly-opened mercury mine. But the wages were insufficient to maintain the families, and movements back to Portage had to be made to maintain fish and hay production. Two villagers recalled their experiences at the mercury mine:

Had to follow work where there was work. Worked in Pinchi Lake mercury mine about 1941-1943 cutting wood for the mine for \$2.50 a cord. Made just enough to live on. People from Babine Lake, Stony Creek, Fort St. James, Tachie, and Takla Lake had cabins here and there. Each man had a certain area to clear off. That would take a few years. At that time sugar, meat, and butter were rationed.

Worked at Pinchi Laker mercury mine with my whole family. I got \$2.50 a cord delivered. My brother and I were partners. We cut seven cords in one day - big money then. But we had to buy hay for the horses. Pretty near all of Tachie and Portage were at Pinchi Lake. Some worked just in the summer, and others in the winter.

Pinchi Lake was recalled as the first wage labour for many Portage people, and it came at a time when fur prices were low, making trapping uneconomical. This was also the time of Steward's fieldwork. However, the need to use the resources of the Portage area remained. One man recalled several movements during a season. Two weeks to a



month were spent at Pinchi Lake, then back to Portage to cut hay, followed by another month at Pinchi Lake. During the last movement, the women stayed behind to make salmon, while the men returned to cutting wood for the mine.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, positions in sawmills and contracts to haul logs opened up as hundreds of small logging and sawmill operations started operating in the region. Several Portage families followed sawmill operations in Babine Lake and Stuart Lake, with a significant shift to Fort St. James in the late 1950s and early 1960s. However, as indicated earlier, the integration of the timber industry into large operations eliminated the small mills and seasonal work, and ended the need for Indian labour.

The work records of various Portage residents, past and present, indicate the movement between trapping, subsistence production, and wage labour. Declines in one sector can be compensated for by expanding participation in another; low fur prices seem the most common reason for movement into wage labour in the 1940s and 1950s. Others engaged in wage labour in order to raise enough money to purchase a trapline in the first place. Trapping and subsistence production are not archaic elements preventing Indians from assimilation into the northern labour pool; Carriers, and others, have moved between the various activities as adaptations to changing prices and availability of resources. Wage labour, trapping, and hunting and fishing are parts of a larger set of activities by which the Portage people have maintained themselves for decades, and through access to what could be seen as nontraditional occupations have maintained their presence on the land and continued subsistence production. The following examples show this.





One man, who currently operates a store in Portage, and who owns a trapping territory in the area, worked for seven years in the 1930s at a lodge on Stuart Lake, with additional work building houses on islands. In the early 1940s, he worked at the Pinchi lake mercury mine, moving his whole family there as it was too hard to move back and forth. He stayed as long as there was work (1940-1944); at that time there were just a few people in Portage: "those who haven't got jobs." In 1947, he worked at a summer resort across from Portage and in 1949 went to Fort St. James to work in the sawmills, eventually moving back to Portage around 1955, when he began trapping again.

Another guided prior to 1940, and also spent two years in the 1930s with a logging outfit operated by a Tachie resident. In 1940, he went to work at Pinchi Lake mercury mine, cutting cord wood, but returning to Portage in the spring and fall. After the mine closed, he returned to Portage for one year, then went to Vanderhoof, clearing land for the airport there for one summer and one fall. With the children in school, he returned to Babine Lake and worked for logging companies for the next eight years, after which he bought a trapline in the Portage area, several meadows, and some horses, and has remained in the area hunting, trapping, fishing, and haying. One of his sons has worked since 1950 in sawmills in Burns Lake, Fort St. James, Kitwanga, Summit Lake, and Leo Creek, and also has returned to Portage, trapping on his father's line.

Another Portage villager also worked in the Pinchi Lake mine from 1941-1943, recalling that each man had a certain area to clear off, which took a few years. The contract paid \$2.50 a cord of wood, which "made just enough to live." In the mid 1950s, he worked in logging





camps in Babine Lake with one of his brothers and cut mine pit props in Burns Lake. In the 1960s, he lived in "24 Camp", the summer camp at Fort St. James for Indians from up the lake, and worked in sawmills, returning to Portage when the sawmills shut down. To this man, one "had to follow work where there was work."

Another brother worked in Fort St. James from 1961 to 1965 in sawmills, but moved back to Portage and obtained a trapline, which he has since expanded into one of the larger territories.

The community is structurally a patrilocal band, and the emphasis is on maintaining it as a 'family', or snatneku. The males in the village control the trapping territories of the immediate region and as such it represents an ideal Tl'azt'enne local group. But the processes which were involved in reaching this situation reveal the dynamics of Tl'azt'enne group formation, and the impact of incorporation into an expanding industrial economy.

The village went through several phases from the time for which adequate genealogical documentation exists. Primarily on the basis of a reconstruction from oral information, Portage can be interpreted as having gone through three phases which have led to the present structure. Each phase is socially referenced to senior males and particularly those who controlled traplines. For heuristic purposes, the structure of the village is discussed in the following periods: 1900, 1920, 1940, and the present (1977). Because Tl'azt'enne history is actually social history, the phases are discussed in terms of key individuals. For simplicity and anonymity, individuals are referred to only by letters, and a schematic diagram of important kinship connections is provided in Figure 12.



Around 1900, the village core consisted of a senior male, A, and his sons, B, C, and D. D moved to Tachie, while B and C remained. While other males moved in from time to time, especially after the construction of the fish hatchery, this period was referred to by the Tl'azt'enne as a time when the village was all one family - that of A. B became village chief, while C was remembered by his son as the "trapping chief", with the territory around Cunningham Lake. The relationship between kinship connections and rights of access to resources was recalled by several older Tl'azt'enne, who characterized the period up to the mid-1920s in the following terms:

Trapping at Cunningham Lake was not open for anybody - just people who lived in Portage.

All Portage people were entitled to trap wherever they are. Portage used to be all one family.

Before registration, anybody, whoever is in the country, well, he almost own that.

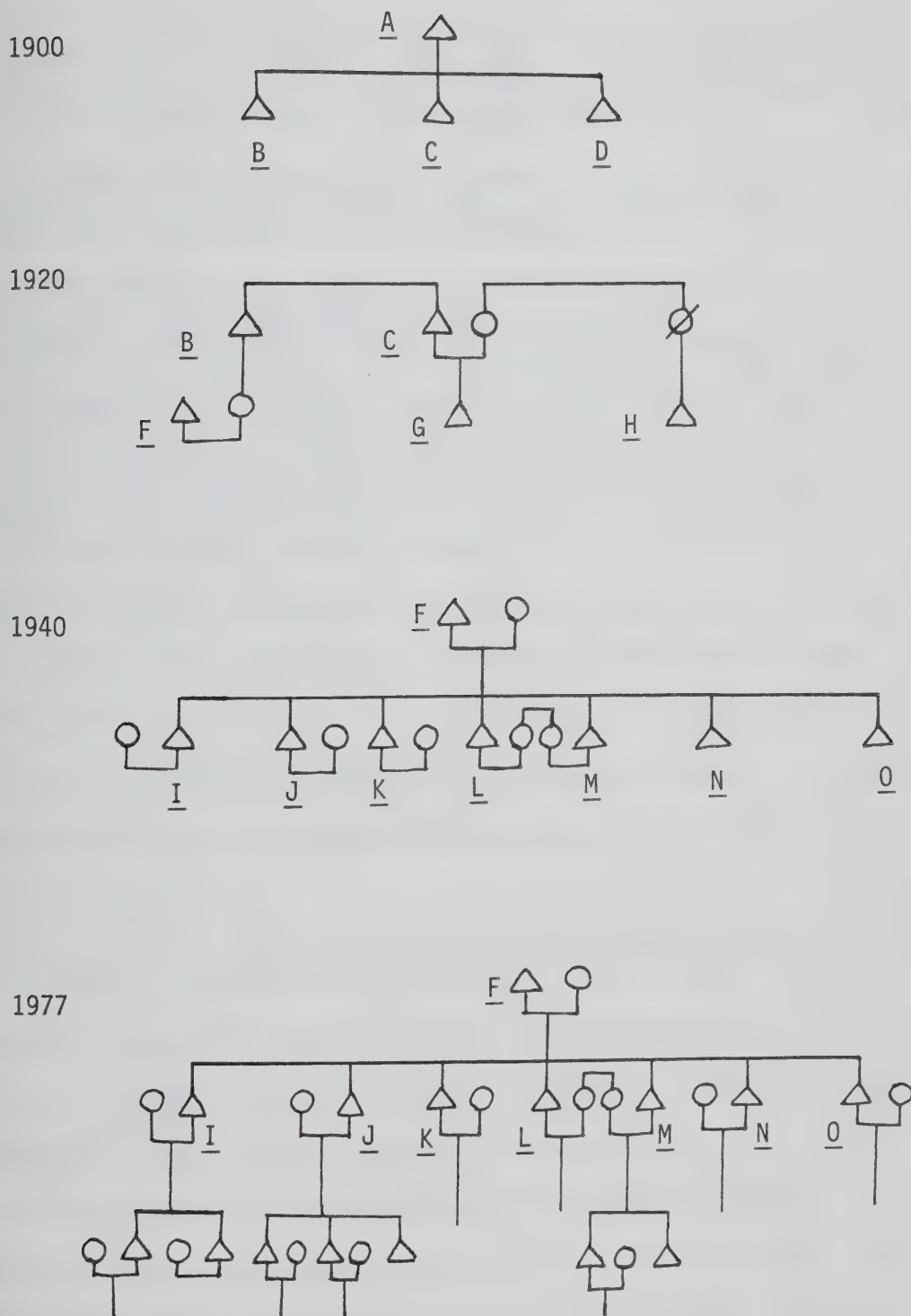
By 1920, the apical male, A, had died, and the village core centred on the male siblings, B and C, and their families. Around 1918, F, from Trembleur Lake, married into Portage and took up residence there, forming the nucleus of a new patricentric group. As F recalled, he:

Moved to Portage because Trembleur Lake was too hard for families to get to Tachie. Good hunting and fishing here - no beaver, though. And the hatchery was going - good job. Portage was a little easier for moving around.

In the late 1920 and early 1930s, trapping territories were registered in the region. Prior to registration Cunningham Lake was used by everyone, although one person was seen as the "trapping boss". After registration, the relations of the group to traplines became formalized. One Tl'azt'en explained his perceptions about the changes:



Figure 12 Portage Social Structure







As a boy, I trapped with \_\_\_ in Sutherland River (at the head of Babine Lake); with \_\_\_ at the west end of Trembleur Lake; with my grandfather at Trembleur Lake; with \_\_\_ one spring at Tchentlo Lake.

The first place I remember trapping was at Cunningham Lake, with C, and around Portage with B, and with my father-in-law (from Tachie) in the area behind Tachie and Tezzeron Lake; and below Shass Mountain (near Portage) with \_\_\_.

I trapped around Portage before I got a trapline. After I got married, I mostly trapped with \_\_\_ in my grandfather's country, which a whole bunch of us used.

Before registration, everybody had little traplines around the lake, with smokehouses by their own reefs (for fishing). C used to own Cunningham Lake. My grandfather, father, and others all used to hunt in different parts of Cunningham Lake the same time as fishing. All had their own lines. After registration, the owner said don't come any more. The west end of Cunningham Lake was used by B. Everybody had own lines before registration - kind of relatives use it. After registration, C took the whole area. When he died, the trapline was divided up between G and H.

The provincial government tried to ensure that traplines were registered by individuals, which altered the group use of an area. Trapline registraton also occurred at a low point in the population of the Indians of British Columbia, which reached its nadir in the mid 1920s, following a devastating influenza epidemic in 1918. As one Tl'azt'en recalled:

Lots of people died in 1918. Most of them died out on the traplines. But they didn't know about it in Portage.

Apparently Portage was spared from the 1918 epidemic, but it hit the other Tl'azt'enne villages, resulting in a number of children being raised by kin, and complicating inheritance patterns.

In 1929, C, aged 53, registered the Cunningham Lake area, indicating that he had trapped there for 39 years (since 1890). The same year, E, B's son, registered the area around Portage. One year earlier F had obtained a trapline from his father-in-law, B, later transferring it to one of his own sons, J.



By 1930, the area had been registered by members of the A family group. But by 1940, the sons of F had acquired some of the trapping territory, and the community began to take on the shape of a patrilocal band, with F as the apical male.

In 1937, G took over his father's line (C), but two years later left Portage, eventually marrying into Necoslie and obtaining another trapline from his father-in-law there. G sold part of his line to I, and transferred the rest to H, who had been raised by G's father. G explained the reasons for his choice of transfers:

I sold a piece of land to I. It was too much for me. After a while I gave up, and gave the place to H, and told the Game Warden to transfer the line to H. It was because my father raised H, and H helped my father.

H himself recalled his years at Portage.

My mother died in 1922, and I stayed with my grandmother in Tachie. She died in 1931. I went to Lejac school while staying with my grandmother. After she died, I went to stay with C and Cunningham Lake and Portage. He had married my aunt. I lived in Portage until the early 1950s. During my married years in Portage, I had G's trapline. Then I went to work in logging camps in Babine Lake for five years. In 1958 I was through with Babine Lake. Then I went to Fort St. James to work in the tie mill. Then other outfits until 1972.

Because of his involvement in wage labour, H left Portage and transferred his trapline there to M:

During my married years in Portage, I had that trapline. That trapline belonged to all that family (the family of A, B, C). It went back to the F family when I transferred it to M. B and C were brothers. It went back into the same family anyway. So we didn't give it to a different place.

Through a series of transfers similar to the ones indicated above, almost all of F's sons were able to obtain traplines in the Portage area. Several used money earned from logging to finance their purchases of traplines. Two brothers, however, do not have traplines.



But through other kinship ties, they have rights of access to other areas. For example, because F originally came from Trembleur Lake, his sons have trapping rights there because it is F's 'father's country'. One brother commented that every spring F's brother, who heads the trapping company at Trembleur Lake, invites him over. But the offer is declined because "we don't know much about the rivers." Another son of F has the option to trap in his wife's 'father's country' between Tachie and Trembleur Lake.

Over time, the original family group at Portage has been replaced by another, the males of which have obtained traplines from sons and grandsons of the first family group. Those males who moved away and married into other villages obtained traplines there through affinal or other connections. But at Portage, the model of a related family group has been maintained, although the origin of the present group depended on a matrilocal residence shift.

Because the village is composed of snatneku, or relatives, who share a common set of parents or grandparents, spouses have had to be obtained from other villages. With the exception of the two brothers who married sisters, each Portage male has different social resources or sets of relatives. Exchanges of goods and services take place along these affinal networks linking Portage males with brothers- and fathers-in-law in the other villages in the Stuart Lake watershed. The kinds of links between local groups which are found today are similar to those of the nineteenth century. No village group is economically or socially isolated. Cross-cutting the Portage community are kinship ties; clan affiliations, which tie the villagers into the other Tl'azt'enne villages; affinal connections; and partici-





pation in the Stuart-Trembleur Lake Band itself, the council of which has elected representatives from each village.

Like other Tl'azt'enne villages, land is a necessary means of production in Portage. The relative isolation of Portage from industrial capitalism, coupled with an increasing integration into state programs (transfer payments, for example) have facilitated the continued use of bush resources. But the region has also become necessary for the continued expansion of logging, and roads will soon break through a century of seeming isolation. Unlike the Alberta farmers about whom Hedley (1979) writes, the Tl'azt'enne cannot move on. The social institutions which reproduce the exchange system may become more important.

The preceeding discussion of a single Carrier village indicates the material basis of a patrilocal community, and the strategies used to acquire trapping territories. It also shows that while the clan-deneza system no longer regulates resource use, the trapping groups and villages are linked by clan membership and participate in potlatches.





## Chapter 8 Comparative Studies of Hunters and Gatherers

### Introduction

The previous chapters provide a basis for concluding that the Carriers have undergone significant changes in their relationship to the various stages of capitalism, and have shifted from a clan-deneza-salmon complex to patrilocal groups controlling trapping territories. The Carrier bush mode of production facilitated mercantile capitalist penetration of the central interior in the nineteenth century. It is clear that the fur trade depended on Indian labour, resources, furs and their consumption of European trade goods. In the next century, effective industrial capitalist use of the same region required Indian land, not labour (except in its initial stage), leading to increasing pressure on the resources which formed the basis of the bush economy. Similar events were occurring elsewhere as hunters, trappers, and gatherers were incorporated into the world economy.

This chapter deals with several studies of social and economic change among hunting and gathering societies (Asch (1979a, 1979b) on the Slavey Indians of the Northwest Territories of Canada, Tanner (1979) on the Mistassini Cree of Quebec, and Lee (1979) on the !Kung of Africa), and with trapping studies in anthropology. These studies are interpreted in light of Carrier ethnography and ethnohistory.



### Social and Economic Change Among Hunters and Gatherers

Asch (1979b) and Lee (1979) present similar models of a hunting mode of production, centred on a social and ideological framework which emphasizes the collective ownership of resources by a population larger than the local groups. However, the reproduction of the indigenous modes of production has been influenced by identifiable historical factors.

Asch (1979a, 1979b) has stressed the compatibility of traditional (that is, pre-contact) resource use patterns and the demands of mercantile capitalism, plus the ability of indigenous relations of production to accommodate trapping for furs. This compatibility was the outcome of two factors: one, the main resource, beaver, could be used either for pelts or food, so that hunting and trapping became complimentary activities; and two, mercantile capitalism did not interfere to any great extent with the traditional society. Asch (1979b:345) further argues that the greatest changes in Slavey society came only when the fur prices dropped, accompanied by an increase in commodity prices. The Canadian government acted to alleviate the economic crisis by relocating hunting groups in towns, and sending children to residential schools. Only at this point were capitalist relations of production able to make inroads into Slavey society, especially through the transfer of cash to individual families (Asch 1979b:345). Asch's analysis points to two significant features influencing Slavey society: one, the relationship of mercantile capitalism to the indigenous mode of production, and two, the role of state intervention. For the Carriers, hunting beaver for food and trapping them for pelts involved opposing sets of activities. Beaver,



and other fur-bearing animals, were taken for food in the spring and summer, when the pelts were of little value to the trading companies. From the perspective of the companies, profit from furs could only be realized if pelts were taken during the winter, which was also the period when the Carriers occupied their winter villages. Unless the fall salmon supplies failed, winter did not appear to be a time of much hunting activity. To gain profits, the companies attempted to turn the Carriers into winter trappers and discourage summer hunting, with apparently some measure of success by the end of the 1800s. Thus the organization of production of beaver for food differed seasonally from trapping for pelts. Trapping only became a major occupation when other resources failed and the state intervened to abolish the traditional means of fishing production. However, in contrast to the Slavey, the downturn in fur prices did not result in a relocation into settlements. This was due in part to the fact that Indian reserves had been established in British Columbia prior to 1900 and the need for the Carriers to maintain intense involvement in the bush economy.

Slavey traditional social structure, or relations of production, were apparently reinforced by mercantile capitalism. The opposite occurred among the Carriers. Carrier trapping lands were ultimately distributed to heads of families and registered in the names of individuals in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The Slaveys and Carriers also contrast in the control of resources. Carrier production groups maintained control of the means of production at the local level, while entering into exchange relations with other production groups having access to similar resources on different production cycles. State intervention at the production level forced





a reorganization, but the indigenous institutions remained, albeit altered in function. These institutions, which I have called 'father's country', and the potlatch-clan system, have become more important during industrial capitalist penetration of the region, reflecting the expansion of the bush economy as people moved back into hunting, trapping, and fishing as their involvement in wage labour diminished. Thus, the institutions which were retained during mercantile capitalism did not disappear during subsequent stages of capitalist penetration in the northern part of British Columbia, but remained with altered functions.

Changes in !Kung society and economy have been more abrupt than for the Carriers. Lee (1979:420) provides the following overview:

The !Kung San of the interior have entered the 1960s in their isolated areas with their group structure and productive systems intact. Through the decade, the Dobe area became open to outside penetration... The decade of the 1970s... brought new challenges that threatened to change fundamentally the basic pattern of !Kung existence. In the early part of the decade the Dobe !Kung passed from a situation of local autonomy to one in which the direction of their lives came increasingly under outside control.

A settlement, mercantile capitalism in the form of a store, home brew supplies, anthropologists, and a reorganization of some !Kung into farmers came in the 1960s. The next decade saw schools, more settlement, and administrative and military incorporation into South African hegemony.

Farming presented an alternative economic base, but it also clashed with the ideological base of the foraging mode of production; the ideology of sharing as part of the foraging mode of production clashed with wealth accumulation inherent in animal husbandry and farming (Lee 1979:412). The Carriers have been able to avoid glaring



contradictions between the reproduction of exchange obligations on one hand, and accumulation of wealth through wage labour on the other by maintaining the matrilineal descent - potlatch structure, the obligations of which draw out household production for community use. Even cash and modern implements are redistributed.

Lee (1979) further presents a general model of a hunting and gathering mode of production and bases his measure of changes on the extent to which the mode of production can be reproduced materially and ideologically. Collective ownership of land is reinforced by an egalitarian ideology which stresses sharing. However, as I have already discussed, access to resources through sharing, rather than directly through production may confer the same adaptive benefits. Societies which regulate access to resources at the exchange level are no less adaptive or flexible than those that maintain direct access through production (eg., cf. Lee 1979:457).

Tanner's (1979) presentation of Mistassini land tenure delves into the issue of ideological representations of relations of production. Tanner (1979:186) presents the land tenure system as one of ownership of animals and proprietorship over land. In other words, rights of production are mediated through the actual resources used:

... the religious ideology implies that the key relations of hunting production are ...between man and animals, and thus it is the relations between the hunting group leader and the animals of the territory on which the prosperity of the whole group rests. The Mistassini do not see land in itself as an object of the property relationship. They often mock the European notion of man owning land, and claim that the land belongs to the animals, or to God. The idea that a relationship can exist between a person and an object, land, is thus rejected by the Cree.  
(Tanner 1979:202)



Tanner's model assumes that the ideological rationalization of relations of production provides an objective statement of those relations. While not denying the ideological basis of Cree land tenure, a similar model cannot be applied to the Carriers. The Carriers argue that specific relations to animals must be respected, and that individuals possess different levels of requisite hunting, trapping, and fishing knowledge. They also stated that everyone could go anywhere to obtain bush food. However, these are political and metaphorical statements. Land and its resources are owned in the sense that rights to resources are defined socially; access is through defined social ties with previous producers. Therefore, like the Mistassini model, one does not own land directly in the sense that land is a commodity like all other commodities. Land cannot be sold outside the community. But producers have demonstrable social connections through other producers to the land. The ideology of ancestral connections prevents non-Carrier males from gaining access, except as co-producers, and, more importantly, denies non-Indians ownership of the land. To have the right to produce is to have had fathers and fathers' fathers who also produced in the same area. That the rights to control are defined socially should not lead us to assume that only social relations are owned. Thus, I emphasize the institutions through which relations of production are reproduced; Tanner stresses the ideology which imposes, ultimately, a collective ownership (by all the Cree) on land. A similar process at another level has occurred among the Carriers. To the non-Indian, the land is represented as Indian land, owned and used by all Indians. The internal land tenure system is sometimes secondary to establishing the





fact of Indian rights. The actual material basis of the bush mode of production is masked by an emic model of collectivity. Relations of production, though, have been presented in this thesis as centred on patrilocal groups. Tanner (1979) locates the continuation of Misstassini society at the ideological level; I locate it for the Carriers at the material and institutional levels. But beside continuity is change.

### Sources of Change in the Carrier Mode of Production

Because the overall economy of the region is dominated by industrial capitalism, the most important sources of change lie outside of the Carrier bush mode of production. Changes in forestry production will ultimately lead to alterations in the material base of the indigenous economy, with an impact on the relations of production.

Recent overutilization of marginal timber has pushed logging operations in search of more distant stands of timber, primarily in areas primarily used by the Carriers for subsistence production. The result has been an accelerated and increased penetration of hunting and trapping habitats. Resource options available to the Carriers may diminish, perhaps ultimately creating a greater requirement for sources of food outside of the bush mode of production. An increase in available Indian labour will exacerbate a situation where Indian labour is already irrelevant to the forest industry, and may increase dependence on transfer payments. New relations of production may emerge, emphasizing the collective ownership of resources at the production level. However, the incorporation of trapping territories to date has served to increase the importance of the Carrier land tenure system. Only those trappers actually registered on a trapline are





eligible for direct compensation payments from logging companies whose operations affect the land. Thus, it has become important to clarify trapping rights prior to logging.

Even if access to bush resources becomes severely curtailed, the present relations of production will likely be reproduced, as trapping territories represent a concrete expression of aboriginal territoriality. Therefore, even in the absence of actual production, the need remains to continually define and legitimize resource and land rights. Clearly, while industrial capitalism may change the material basis of Carrier existence, the future relations of production may be an attempt to reconcile band rights over resources with claims of the separate trapping companies.

All of the above factors may alter the points of articulation between the capitalist and bush modes and production, reducing the effectiveness of Carrier social institutions in resisting capitalist relations of production. The modes of production are articulated at several points. Industrial resources, such as commercial products, store food, and cash payments are redistributed at potlatches, along with bush resources (meat, fish). Cash from wage labour and transfer payments are used to maintain the means of bush production (rifles, snowmobiles, trucks). Bush resources in turn are used for food (meat, fish) which is shared among kin or redistributed at ceremonies. Pelts from fur bearing animals and hides reworked into crafts are sold, and the cash used to fulfill exchange obligations or refurbish the technology required for bush production. Through informal sharing, largely defined on the basis of kinship ties, and structured exchange situations, such as a potlatch, household income and production are redistributed.



Whatever changes occur will not be in isolation from regional and national events. Structural transformations will to some extent reflect reactions to exogenous pressures. However, following Asch (1979a:93), we can identify three factors of change, and some possible directions.

Asch suggests that the most important component of change is "conscious knowledge of an alternative method of material reproduction." (Asch 1979a:93) Certainly the Carriers are surrounded by alternate relations of production: industrial capitalism with forestry corporations, and loggers who either sell their labour or contract services to the larger operations. But while wage labour is accepted, the hoarding of incomes is not, and obligatory exchanges, such as through potlatching, appropriate individual earnings. Further, the control of land as a means of production by distant corporations is seen as antithetical to Carrier values.

As Asch (Ibid.) further notes, the development of productive forces must also be sufficient to sustain the new relations of production. Except for a very few, who have obtained logging equipment (eg., bulldozers) through loans from government agencies, the Carriers are able to enter the market only as wage labourers - in a situation where their labour competes directly with that of migrant wage labourers. However, even those who have attained the necessary means of logging production remain linked to bush production and the exchange system. Further, the transformation of kin into wage labourers has not yet occurred.

Finally, change may result from collective action which creates new relations of production. The Carriers are conscious of economic



changes taking place in their region, and have taken actions to express their collective dependence on bush resources. This has entailed blockading a government railway line that runs through several reserves, and emphasizing the need to maintain access to bush resources.

The bush mode of production has to date presented little threat to industrial operations, with the exception of the rail blockade. However, future conflicts may arise at the material and institutional levels. The use of common habitats for logging and bush food production is increasing, and state policies ensure the primacy of industrial production - while, ironically, maintaining the bush mode of production. In the past few years, a substantial increase in logging activities in the Stuart Lake area has raised the spectre of the loss of traditional food sources, a situation likely to escalate in the future. At the institutional level, Carrier relations of production define a set of claims to land and resources which, if recognized by the provincial and federal governments, may give the indigenous population a modicum of control, or input, into resource development.

#### Trapping Studies in Anthropology

The issue of the impact of trapping and trapping territories on indigenous subarctic societies has a long history in anthropology (cf. Helm 1976:36-37). Two themes have dominated the scene: one, the feasibility of fixed trapping territories, or, as they have been called, 'family hunting territories' (Speck 1915); and two, the impact of government-imposed trapping territories. The Tl'azt'enne data suggest a process different than that found in the existing literature.





The first theme has involved historical and cultural ecological arguments. In opposition to Speck's (1915) proposal that 'family hunting territories' were part of aboriginal society, Leacock (1954) and Rogers (1963) emphasized that such a land tenure system was a product of the post-contact fur trade, associated with a shift of economic ties from the Indian community to the trading post. Families could then reproduce their existence apart from the larger Indian community. Knight (1965) countered Leacock's (1954) model, pointing out that the resource base available to most subarctic groups precluded dependence on a trading post for adequate food supplies, and that the origin of trapping territories lies with government policies. Others have emphasized the ecological difficulties of maintaining a rigid territorial land tenure system in the subarctic. For example, Savishinsky (1974:11) argues that the Hare Indians of the Northwest Territories resisted fixed trapping territories, and suggests that the "fixity of a trapline contradicts the fluidity of the environment."

The Tl'azt'enne data suggest that trapping territories existed at the time of the first encounters with Europeans. A dependence on small game, especially beaver, in addition to fish, suggests that land was an important means of production, and that specific resources were localized. The framework within which resources were appropriated in the nineteenth century has already been described above. The present trapping system reflects both the imposition of territories registered by the government, and a reworking of Tl'azt'enne relations of production to ensure that the system remains based on lineal kinship ties. The present system is different from that of the nineteenth century - for example, the deneza, or 'headmen', no longer control access - but



there is structural continuity. The clan-potlatch system remains as a means of redistributing resources, and patrilineal ties are emphasized as a means of validating rights to trapping territories. Access to the means of production is still controlled by small production groups at the production level, even though bush food and industrial items circulate through sharing. Different subarctic populations have handled the issue of access to resources in different ways through existing social institutions, and it is possible that territoriality and flexibility are not incompatible in the subarctic.

In an important reappraisal of Speck (1915), Tanner (1973) argues that the family hunting territory concept as originally formulated represented a social and ideological framework within which production took place, and was not necessarily fixed in perpetuity to a particular territory. Different families organized and coordinated their production activities as if they had separate territories, which in turn were socially represented as relationships between patrilocal groups. In a similar fashion, the Tl'azt'enne local groups, or villages, are seen as families, which in turn have, or had, male leaders. Trapping territories are places where a line of males hunted, trapped, and fished; individuals reference themselves to a 'father's country'. Those males without a 'father's country' lack a necessary point of entry into the land tenure system. For example, a Sekani male who married into the Tl'azt'enne community decades ago still lacks a trapline because he has no legitimate Tl'azt'enne ancestor. This type of social relations of production emerged from material changes, especially the shift from salmon fishing with weirs to the hunting and trapping of large and small game.



The impact which the Carrier system of land tenure made on the Hudson's Bay Company is indicated in correspondence in 1888 between the company and the British Columbia government. Answering a request from the government for information on the regulation of wildlife as a prelude to proposed legislation, the Chief Trader of the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort St. James suggested that the Carrier land tenure system would provide an excellent model for any wildlife regulations, commenting:

Every family in the Indian country still possesses its old inherited and well defined section of land, from Beaver hunting on which, all other Indians are jealously excluded... this ought to prove a powerful factor in the way of facilitating the operation of successful measures for the future protection of the Beaver. (HBCA B.188/b/11, fo.90, dated March 30, 1888)

Few studies have been made of the actual impact of government-imposed trapping territories. The ethnographies produced by Leacock (1954) and Rogers (1963) predate trapline registration in their areas, and the resistance of trappers to such a system is used as evidence that fixed territories would prove unworkable (Leacock 1954:30-31, Rogers 1963:70). Another researcher, Nelson (1973:276) comments on how the Black River Kutchin of Alaska just sort of grew into traplines, resulting in the increased use of smaller territories. Dunning (1959) has produced one of the most complete accounts of the impact of government programs on the operation of a subarctic society. Dunning (1959:35) suggests that northern Ojibwa traplines became the basis of a new society, underwritten economically by increased transfer payments. An increased population led to a situation where while the number of trappers increased, the total land base remained the same. The result was increased pressure on available resources, presenting





"a problem previously unknown to the traditional subsistence society. A result of this is the number of conflicts within domestic groupings and the emergence of a new definition of society." (Ibid.) Two immediate results were a trend to band endogamy, as the previously scattered local groups became concentrated in one large band, and the problem of providing in-marrying males with traplines (Dunning 1959:173). Like the Sekani who married into the Tl'azt'enne community, a finite land base and an emphasis on local ancestors resulted in a marginal position for in-marrying males.

### Summary

Comparisons with other studies of hunters and gatherers, particularly in the subarctic, indicate both the range of anthropological approaches used to understand social and economic change, and the need to discern the relative importance of commodity and bush resource production. In contrast to some other groups, the Carriers maintained their relative independence from commodity production because of the levels of bush resource production possible. But eventually, as described in previous chapters, the Carriers too could not rely solely on bush resources for their livelihood. But unlike those societies with bilateral kinship, the Carriers were able to maintain social institutions which maintained exchange, and reproduced ties of reciprocity in their communities. Subarctic studies have not dealt extensively with the atrophy of matrilineal descent as the material conditions changed. The previous chapters have indicated that along with the decline in access to salmon, and an increased use of moose and fur-bearing animals, the nineteenth century mode of production, characterized by deneza control of key production areas, was





transformed. The present social structure reflects both the emergence of patrilocal groups, controlling trapping territories, and the changed function of the clan-potlatch system. The deneza no longer control production, but act as organizers of potlatches. The former clan-deneza-potlatch system did not disappear, but remains to play a particular role in the contemporary mode of production.



## Chapter 9 Summary and Conclusions

### Summary

The present structure of Tl'azt'enne society and economy has been viewed as the outcome of the articulation of two modes of production - one indigenous, and the other intrusive - as the region was progressively incorporated into a larger national and international economic order. The outcome was the maintenance of a Carrier bush mode of production articulated in a social formation dominated by the capitalist mode of production and its relations of production. Carrier social institutions serve to maintain reciprocal obligations and exchanges between Indian households, drawing on the resources of both modes of production. Contrary to earlier descriptions of the Carriers by Steward (various), both the dependence on bush resources and the operation of these social institutions, particular clans, have remained an essential part of Carrier life. However, the deneza/clan-salmon complex of the nineteenth century has been transformed, and new relations of production have emerged. Resources are no longer controlled through the clan system, and patrilocal trapping companies control key elements of the bush mode of production.

As described in Chapters 2 and 3, access to strategic resources in the bush mode of production was through a combination of effective



technologies and social relations in which local groups controlled direct production, but shared resources with neighbouring groups. This mode of production, dominant in the early eighteenth century, provided a means of transferring resources and/or people from regions of surplus food to areas of scarcity. Periodic fluctuations in the supply of key resources were associated with natural cycles. Through an exchange system reproduced through matrilineal descent and potlatching, production groups were linked in an increasingly wide geographical area. Local production groups controlled direct access to resources within sections of watersheds; local resource failures were overcome by access to resources of adjacent groups in the same watershed. In turn, resource failures in a complete watershed resulted in movements to other watersheds, where access to resources was gained through sharing or exchange. Thus, through a system which defined the production rights of local production groups, while linking such groups through sharing and exchange, recurrent and capricious resource fluctuations could be handled. While utilizing ecological data, Chapters 2 and 3 show that we cannot assume that the forms of social organization were adaptive responses to cultural ecological factors alone. To be sure, the exchange system had adaptive utility. However, the relations of production of nineteenth century Carrier society set the stage for subsequent organizational solutions to problems generated by incorporation into the Canadian state, the most important being the demise of the power of the deneza.

As detailed in Chapter 4 mercantile capitalism was able to expand into the region by drawing upon Carrier labour and resources. Rather than immediately transforming the prior non-capitalist mode of produc-





tion, the trading companies' dependence on the Carriers at first served to reinforce the existing material conditions of reproduction, and the indigenous relations of production. The two modes of production, mercantile capitalism and bush, were articulated at the level of exchange through trade. However, patrilocal groups began to emerge as the material basis of the prior relations of production changed.

Mercantile capitalism drew surplus value from the Carriers by trading European goods for items which the Carriers produced. To realize surplus value, aspects of Carrier hunting and trapping activities were altered. Steel traps were introduced to increase production, and activities rescheduled. For example, summer hunts for beaver and bear for meat shifted to winter, when the pelts were more valuable for trade. This gave impetus to economic activities which increasingly fell outside of the prior relations of production.

As described in Chapter 5, expansion into the region by state and industrial interests altered the relationship between the modes of production. Once essential to mercantile capitalism and its uses of the region, Carrier labour and services became irrelevant and marginal to industrial capitalism. As the marginality of the Carriers to the industrial sector of capitalism decreased, their need for bush resources and transfer payments increased. Instead of being transformed into wage labourers, and unemployed class completely dependent on subsidies, or commodity producers, the Carriers expanded their use of bush resources, particularly after the middle of the 1960s. The specific reasons for this increasing marginality have been spelled out in Chapter 5; most, however, relate to technological changes as forest operations were integrated into the production requirements of the



pulp and paper industry. Thus, instead of leading to the dissolution of the bush mode of production, industrial capitalism increased the need to continue hunting, trapping, and fishing. The effective use of bush resources, though, now depends on modern implements, purchased with cash from wage labour and transfer payments. Thus, while industrial operations might have led to the dissolution of the bush mode of production, the form of articulation with the state sector has facilitated the retention of subsistence production. Payments made to individuals are redistributed through the clan-potlatch system and informal reciprocal obligations based on kinship. All of those made the nineteenth century relations of production relatively ineffective.

The Carrier bush mode of production has been described in general terms and how it operates in a single village. The perspective from a single village recapitulates at the local level the historical processes whereby the Carriers became integrated into, and coped with, industrial and mercantile capitalism. It also shows the structure of kinship relations which link local production groups in an exchange network covering a watershed, and the patrilocal nature of a local group. Specific examples of household production show the use of, and dependence on, bush resources in the contemporary Carrier economy.

Two main types of social relations have been identified. Rights to trapping areas are expressed through the notion of a 'father's country'; all descendants of a male trapline owner retain potential rights of access to the resources included in the trapping territory. Related males also share items of technology such as boats, trucks, and rifles. An individual in turn belongs to one of three named groups which, at first glance, appear to be formal matrilineal descent



groups. However, their shallow genealogical depth and the fact that individuals can be sponsored into the group of the father indicate the flexible arrangements necessary to maintain a triadic exchange structure in a small population. These exchange units link everyone in the Carrier villages of the Stuart Lake watershed in a formal system of reciprocal obligations, set into motion by the death of a member. The descent groups cross-cut local residential groups and trapping companies, and function in part as a means of redistributing bush resources and industrial products throughout the community.

The land tenure system, expressed through the phrase 'father's country', and the exchange structure are reproduced as a set of relations which mediate access to resources, services, and people. Through the traplines, the Carriers express their ownership of the land, and the inheritance of the means of trapping production through male lines maintains rights within the community. The exchange units also provide a ready symbol of the collective nature of the Carrier society. The present form of resource ownership contrasts with the nineteenth century mode of production, and the previous power of the deneza - diminished by material changes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The ethnographic and historical data have been interpreted in terms of the articulation of modes of production, and the resultant material and social changes among the Carriers. This has been contrasted with the acculturation approach of Murphy and Steward (1956) and other approaches which have addressed social and economic change. The Carrier bush mode of production is reproduced materially through subsistence production and cash incomes from wage labour and transfer





payments. It is reproduced institutionally through a social framework which maintains rights to the means of production over time, through inheritance and patrilocal groups, and access to resources and services through the clan-potlatch system.

At the basis of the Carrier bush mode of production are relations which reproduce rights to resources at the production level, yet redistribute them to the community at particular times.

From the above summary, we can turn to some fundamental questions implicit in the mode of production approach, particularly the reasons for the existence of the bush mode of production, how it is maintained, the conditions under which it is reproduced, and the possibilities of future change.

#### Maintaining the Bush Mode of Production

The Carrier bush mode of production exists at three levels: materially, socially, and ideologically. At the material level, hunting, trapping, and fishing represent a more important resource use option than a full time commitment to wage labour. Given the marginality of Carrier labour to industrial capitalism, it is doubtful that even if all of the eligible Carrier labour force wanted full time employment that positions would be available. For many of the Carriers, a low cash income, derived from a number of sources, is adequate to provide for the means of bush production. In other words, Carrier households pursue a variety of resources, and use cash to maintain a technology appropriate for subsistence production. Potlatches and reciprocal obligations ensure that material goods are redistributed or available at times for collective appropriation. Unlike non-Indian labourers, the Carriers can expand bush production





to replace store foods if cash supplies are low. Store food also enters the exchange system through potlatching.

The bush economy also exists in part because it did not have to be destroyed in order for industrial development to take place at the start. In fact, transfer payments from the state facilitated the expansion of subsistence production. Recent expansion of the logging industry, however, has reduced the resource options available, and for the first time in over a century, industrial capitalism and the bush mode of production are dependent on common habitats for production. For example, logging operations have extended into trapping territories, and logging roads have opened up access to formerly isolated fishing lakes used by Carrier production groups.

While in some Native communities, welfare has been seen as the basis of the economy (Dunning 1964), for the Tl'azt'enne transfer payments (including welfare) are a means of maintaining the bush economy. Government intervention in the past destabilized the bush economy (for example, by eliminating fish weirs), but cash from the social service programs after the 1950s has provided a means of stabilizing the bush economy. Transfer payments have ensured that income can be maintained without a total shift to wage labour or a complete dependence on commodity production.

Paradoxically, while the expansion of industrial capitalism itself might have led to the total integration of the Carriers into the national economy in the same fashion described by Elias (1975), state social service programs and transfer payments have facilitated the maintenance of subsistence production and the reproduction of the exchange system. Steward's (1941a, 1941b, 1941c) conclusions about



Carrier social and economic change reflect the impact of some changes up to 1940, but predate the extension of significant government social service programs to Indians by a decade. His model could not have foreseen the impact of state intervention at this level, and the apparent expansion of the bush economy, which may have been almost invisible at the time of his research. As indicated in the previous chapter, Steward carried out his fieldwork over the summer of 1940, when many of the Stuart Lake Carriers were working at the Pinchi Lake mercury mine.

Socially, the bush mode of production is reproduced through a kinship and descent system which provides a framework for production and exchange, and for redistributing store food, cash, and other products originating in the capitalist mode of production. Patrilocal groups control the means of trapping production, and a clan-potlatch system cross-cuts local groups. While non-Indian people may participate in the exchange system by being invited to a potlatch, rights to trapping resources require identifiable links to an ancestral Carrier male who was seen to have owned the tract. In-marrying males lack such direct connections, and have to rely on being allowed to trap in the territory of their wife's father's country.

Ideologically, the Carriers argue that material production, especially trapping, reflects the continuation of a way of life. Also, while the relations of production differentiate between those who have direct social ties to specific tracts of land, the collective nature of aboriginal rights is reflected in statements about Indian land. In contrast to Tanner's (1979) model of Mistassini Cree relations of production, in which rights to resources are mediated



through rights over animals, the Carriers maintain a direct social connection. The notion of access to a resource area by, and through, males is reflected in the notion that males descended from a common male are "just like one family". This analogy is also used to describe the relations between members of a matrilineal descent, or exchange, group. The descent groups and potlatching are also seen as a means of redistributing resources, as reflected by a Carrier's statement that potlatching is the Tl'azt'enne welfare system.

The existence of this mode of production clearly requires both continued access to bush resources and the reproduction of the set of production and exchange rights described in Chapter 6. Working the system in turn requires knowledge about how to use the bush, and how to define oneself socially in order to obtain or maintain production and exchange rights, and continued participation in the redistribution system. However, as indicated in the preceeding chapters, the bush mode of production has had to operate under some limitations, and these can be summarized as the conditions of reproduction of the bush mode of production.

#### The Conditions of Reproduction of the Bush Mode of Production

The ways in which industrial capitalism and government policies operate in the region ultimately control the reproduction of the material basis of the bush mode of production. Because the relations of production within this mode control access to bush resources and the redistribution of goods originating in the capitalist mode of production, a change in the material conditions would have an impact at the social level. The social institutions present in Carrier society serve as a means of ensuring that household production, from whatever





source, is in part redistributed. While the capitalist mode of production controls to some extent the reproduction of the material base of the Carrier bush mode of production because the means of subsistence production are derived from it (rifles, steel traps, and so on), the clan-potlatch system and reciprocal obligations based on kinship have maintained extrafamilial ties and exchanges. While implements necessary for Carrier social reproduction are not generated within Carrier society, they, along with cash, enter the network of reciprocal ties once brought in to the community. For example, rifles and trucks are borrowed by members of trapping groups. This ensures access to resources by members of the community who have close social links with the owners of the technology.

Industrial capitalism controls the material reproduction of the bush mode of production in the last instance, though, by its use of common habitats, and its ability through this use to directly or indirectly limit Carrier access to bush resources. State policies with respect to the use of bush resources also influence access, and the withdrawal of transfer payments would mean substantial technological changes in the subsistence economy which would reduce its importance.

Dependency theorists (Elias 1975, Watkins 1980) have argued that a principal outcome of capitalist penetration is a separation of producers from the land. This has happened to a degree in the Stuart Lake area: the creation of Indian reserves effectively eliminated large tracts of land from Indian control, and much of this alienated land forms part of extensive timber leases held by corporations. But the inroads of industrial capitalism have come late to the region, and



the Carriers are only now having to deal with the possibility of a larger loss of resources.

Within a mode of production are key, or determinate, social relations which define rights to resources and people. Patrilocal trapping groups, matrilineal descent groups and potlatching described earlier are especially important in providing a logic of social reproduction. Attempts were made to undermine the determinate relations of production by several methods. Indian agents attempted to eliminate matrilineal descent through inheritance rules which emphasized the role of the nuclear family in property ownership and inheritance. While Steward (1941a, 1941b, 1941c) accepted the demise of the clan-potlatch system by 1940, this study has shown that it serves as a framework for the redistribution of goods originating in the capitalist mode of production. Its primary function is at the exchange level, not through the direct control of production. Potlatching was banned between 1884 and 1951, but again this study shows that potlatching remains an important institution in Carrier society. The retention of both matrilineal descent and potlatching indicates the probability that government representatives did not understand the complexities of them and were unable to eliminate their operations. Steward (1941a) seems to have accepted the success of government initiatives in this area, along with the notion that the acceptance of non-Indian values by the Carriers meant such institutions had no functional value. The extrafamilial exchange relations reproduced through this system have been described in Chapter 6.



Certainly one of the factors in Carrier social change was the loss of weirs and resultant decline in the power of the deneza. In addition, several new resources - moose, wage labour - outside of the traditional control of the deneza became important elements of the mode of production. The registration of traplines solidified the rights of the patrilocal trapping groups.

There is little in the ethnographic record to indicate attempts by the deneza to regain power. This is perhaps explicable by the almost simultaneous loss of the material basis of the clans and the appearance of resources outside of deneza control. People no longer had to go to clan-controlled means of production for a livelihood.

From the above information, it is clear that government policies, completely understood or not, tended to isolate nuclear families economically and socially. But for the Carriers, the continuation of extrafamilial exchange through the clan-potlatch system served to mute the possible consequences of government actions.

The banning of fish weirs, coupled with the placement of nets in families, represent further attempts to isolate nuclear families and dissolve extrafamilial relations. But success in this area was limited, due to the poor quality of nets supplied and the recurrent need for production groups to maintain exchange ties with each other to overcome local resource fluctuations. In other words, the social institutions which reproduced a system of reciprocity have been able, to date, to maintain extrafamilial exchanges and reciprocal obligations in spite of possible consequences of government actions.

As indicated earlier, the relations of production were also affected by depopulation, especially from epidemics. Direct lines of





inheritance were blurred as parents and grandparents died, and children were raised by collateral kin. The number of people available to operate the bush economy also fell due to these diseases, reaching a low point in the late 1920s. Simultaneously, trapline registrations enacted by the provincial government consolidated resource areas in the hands of the survivors. In some areas, primarily below the present study, Indian trapping territories were registered by settlers, permanently alienating them from Indian production. The implications of a land tenure system frozen during a population nadir are beginning to appear, and the expansion of members of trapping companies has been described in Chapter 6.

The ability of the Carriers to influence the level of production of bush resources has also been reduced. Habitat modification through burning, as Lewis (1980) has described for northern Alberta, may have occurred in the past. But this activity, along with the most effective fishing technology, has been eliminated. Assumptions about the superior efficiency of European technology (Murphy and Steward 1956) find little substantiation in the Carrier data. In some respects, the Carriers are operating the bush economy with an inappropriate technology, especially with respect to fishing.

Murphy and Steward's (1956) acculturation model represents one of the most pervasive explanations of social and economic change among hunting societies, and has been applied to the Carriers (Steward 1955). According to this approach, hunting societies become increasingly dependent on imported commodities, and eventually lose the skills and knowledge necessary to sustain themselves with pre-contact modes of production. Contact, and the availability of





theoretically desired foreign products, creates dependency, and the hunters eventually become completely acculturated as wage labourers.

But this study has shown that such an approach is not applicable to the Carriers. Neither the bush economy nor the skills required to use bush resources have been lost by the Carriers, even after almost two centuries of culture contact with Europeans and Canadians. In fact, Carrier involvement in wage labour and commodity production was integrated into the ecological imperatives of bush resources. Further, the importance of the bush economy increased, not diminished, as the region became incorporated into the logic of capitalist production, and new forms of relations of production - centred on trapping territories - emerged. Historically identifiable failures in critical bush resources and the thrust of government policies were the key factors in increased Carrier involvement in wage labour and commodity production - not the availability of trade goods.

The bush economy and wage labour are integral parts of an ongoing system in which production in one sector expands or contracts to meet changes in the other. Wage labour and/or commodity production have not initiated an irreversible movement away from the bush economy and an abandonment of Carrier social institutions, but rather have served to maintain, at times, the bush economy (by providing cash to replenish the means of bush resource production), or to offset temporary shortages in subsistence resources.

The continued importance of the bush economy, and its requisite skills and knowledge, and the emergence of patrilocal trapping groups were not foreseen by Murphy and Steward (1956). This study suggests that an Indian hunting, fishing, and trapping society will not give up



the use of bush resources, except when forced to do so. In fact, the very marginality of the Carriers to late industrial capitalism in the region resulted in an expansion of the bush economy.

Analogous to the maintenance of a bush economy, social institutions which reproduce a system of reciprocal exchanges have also been maintained. Only now their function is to redistribute resources from both the capitalist and bush modes of production to the Carrier communities. We can hypothesize that so long as access to bush resources is maintained and traditional social institutions continue to play a mediating and redistributive function, the bush mode of production will remain. Two other important aspects of the continuation of this mode of production are the continued financial inputs of state social service programs and a low population. About one-third of the possible band members reside off the reserves, and their social reproduction then takes place in urban centres removed from the Stuart Lake area. The bush economy has proven to be resilient, but the extent to which it can absorb an expanding population without off-reserve movements is unclear. But the crisis in the bush mode of production will likely only occur if ungulates and sockeye salmon disappear from the region, or the Carriers lose their access to these key resources.

The operation of the bush economy requires the purchase of certain material goods, such as guns, outboard boat motors, and food, from the industrial sector of the capitalist mode of production. These then are used as the means of subsistence production. These items, and the products obtained from the bush, are redistributed at the local level through the network of reciprocal ties. In the past, the Hudson's Bay Company distributed gifts to individuals, who in turn passed them on



to their kin. Now, the band office distributes money for social services which, along with household incomes derived directly from the government, make it possible to operate the bush economy.

Potlatching and kinship serve as a means of moving goods from the capitalist to the bush mode of production. For example, potlatch goods are purchased by the host group and redistributed along with cash and bush food. Household incomes and production, then, are appropriated by the clans to purchase items necessary for potlatching. The cash used for the purchase of potlatch goods comes from a variety of sources: transfer payments, wage labour, and commodity or craft production. These exchanges show the connections between the capitalist and bush modes of production and the importance of particular social institutions in redistributing the resources of both.

### Conclusion

The necessity for detailed ethnographic and historical data on the Carrier Indians of British Columbia is clear, and should provide a point of departure for future research on culture change. The Carrier data indicate that incorporation into an expanding capitalist society need not lead to the dissolution of the indigenous mode of production. Changes have taken place, but the material base of the Carriers remains centred on hunting, trapping, and fishing - not as an ideology, but as a set of concrete activities. The institutional basis of this economy is governed by social relations which are non-capitalist in origin, and through which industrial goods are redistributed. However, the Carrier data also show that the reproduction of the indigenous mode of production is ultimately linked to, and dependent on, the dominant capitalist mode of production. As the





material base of the Carriers changed, so did their social institutions, and traditional structures remained with altered functions, and new relations of production emerged around trapping territories.

The detailed economic data in this paper also show that hunting, trapping, and fishing represent pragmatic choices, given the position of the Carrier Indians in the larger industrial economy. The extent to which the bush economy can remain a viable alternative in the face of industrial expansion of common habitats remains problematic.

The data also show that we must differentiate between access to bush resources at the production and exchange levels, and not attribute flexibility to one, but not the other. Further, while the framework of production and exchange is represented ideologically as collective rights we must not accept without question the ideological representations as objective statements of what actually occurs on the ground.

Finally, the use of an ecologically oriented anthropology in the analysis of sub-arctic hunting and gathering groups has produced excellent descriptions of the importance of bush resources (Rushforth 1977), resource-use strategies (Feit 1973, Nelson 1973), the ideology of production (Tanner 1979), and social relations in small populations (Savinshinsky 1974). Most of these have focused on groups outside of the Pacific drainage, underscoring the assumption that the matrilineal basis of western Athapaskan populations has been substantially altered by contact with Northwest Coast societies. This study shows that matrilineal descent groups and potlatching, along with patrilocal trapping groups, have roles to play in the contemporary mode of



production. Further, this study has drawn on ecological and historical data to give insights into the operation, structure, and transformation of a hunting, trapping, and fishing community as it is 'lived in' on a daily basis.

The mode of production approach, adopted here, makes relations of production of critical analytical importance. It describes hunting, trapping, and fishing from historical and ecological perspectives, and shows the material factors underlying social change. Above all, this approach stresses the relative autonomy of populations operating with different modes of production, articulated in a social formation dominated by the capitalist mode of production. As this paper has demonstrated, any portrayal of the Carriers which does not take into account their integration into an expanding capitalist mode of production artificially isolates important sources of change. But that very integration does not necessarily dissolve or eliminate the use of bush resources or social institutions within the indigenous society. This study shows that the integration of non-capitalist modes of production into a social formation dominated by industrial capitalism does not necessarily lead to the dissolution of either the use of traditional resources or prior social institutions, and in fact may facilitate the emergence of new relations of production. In fact, the material and social basis of the non-capitalist mode of production may become more important at a time when acculturation may appear to have been accomplished, creating a symbiotic relationship between two modes of production. But perhaps most importantly, this study shows that new forms of relations of production can emerge from Indian



communities seemingly totally acculturated, and that prior institutions can serve contemporary functions rather than simply disappearing. In other words, transformation can occur without complete absorption into the dominant society.



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## Appendix 1 Carrier Salmon Production

The following table indicates estimates of sockeye salmon taken by Tl'azt'enne and Necoslie villages between 1967 and 1977 (Sources: Fisheries Canada, Prince George; Field notes).

Table 7 Sockeye Salmon Production by Tl'azt'enne and Necoslie Villages, 1967-1977

Year	Number of Salmon Obtained	<u>Tl'azt'enne Villages</u> <sup>1</sup>		<u>Necoslie</u> <sup>2</sup>	Total
		Number of Households Fishing	Number of Days Fishing	Number of Salmon Obtained	
1967	1,378	23	20		
1968	122	9	17		
1969	4,974	27	28		
<u>1970</u>	1,904	23	21		
1971	1,896	30	25		
1972	587	12	23	887	1,474
1973	7,200	33	31	6,517	13,717
<u>1974</u>	1,489	24	23	1,685	3,174
1975	3,672	30	27	1,381	5,053
1976	not available				
<u>1977</u>	4,228	29	36		

Notes: <sup>1</sup> Years underlined (\_\_\_\_) are on the dominant 1901 line)

<sup>1</sup> Includes the following villages: Pinchi, Tachie, Grand Rapids, and Trembleur Lake.

<sup>2</sup> Incomplete data for number of households fishing and days fished.

Necoslie and Tachie are the largest villages in the Stuart Lake watershed and the number of households fishing and total production are higher than for the smaller villages, as indicated in the following table:



Table 8 Sockeye Salmon Catch by Villages in 1975

Village	Number of Families Fishing	Number of Salmon
Necoslie	16	1,381
Pinchi	3	159
Tachie	25	3,299
Grand Rapids	n/a	n/a
Trembleur Lake	2	214
Takla Lake	6	107

Using the above tables, an estimate can be made of the contribution of sockeye salmon to the domestic economy. From a sample of sockeye salmon, the estimated weight is an average of 2.10 kg (4.6 lb.), prior to cleaning. Estimated dressed weight of Stuart Lake sockeye salmon is 1.8 kg (or 4.1 lb.). The 1975 Tl'azt'enne sockeye salmon catch of 3,672 then represents 6609 kg (15,077 lb., or 7.5 tons) of usable salmon. The 1977 household catch of 4,228 sockeye salmon converts into 7863 kg, or 17,334.5 lb. (8.6 tons) of eatable fish. This averages out to roughly 272 kg (600 lb.) per fishing household. The cost of replacing this sockeye salmon with supplies from the nearest food store was at least \$2,100.00 (based on the cost of salmon in 1977). While the translation of bush food into dollar values gives an indication of the importance of the bush economy, it does not measure differences in nutritional value between store food and bush food, and a straight dollar value is misleading (cf. Asch (1976) and Rushforth (1977) on the conversion of bush and store foods).

Each household maintains a different level of fishing production, based on technological and other factors, including the ability, or



desire to substitute other foods. However, fish is exchanged throughout the community, and non-fishing families, or families unable to produce in that season can receive salmon from kin. For example, salmon caught at Tachie are given to consanguineal and affinal kin in Portage.

Eleven households were observed fishing for sockeye salmon over the period July 26 to August 9, 1976, the results of which are indicated in Table 9. Several comments can be made about the data. Fishing usually begins in the up-lake villages (Tachie, Grand Rapids, and so on) after word has been received that sockeye salmon have been taken at Necoslie, at the outlet of the lake. One or two households set out their nets, and word rapidly spreads the next day as to their success or failure. During the sample period, two households put in nets July 25. While their catch the next day (July 26) was small, two other households followed suit, with substantially increased catches. The third day, four other households followed, and fishing continued until either the households had met their production requirements, or abilities, or the run ended. The data also shows that the number of days spent fishing by various households ranged from one to a maximum of five (Note: days not present in the table reflect weekends or stormy days, when fishing was either prohibited or impossible). For example, household Number 10 spent three days fishing, and obtained 50, 83, and 27 sockeye. The 83 sockeye caught on the second day were the result of using two nets, and the time required for processing the fish exhausted the available labour force, taking all day to clean and hang the fish. The next day, part of the labour force departed and only one net was set, resulting in a lower catch.



Table 9 Sockeye Salmon Catches of Selected Tl'azt'enne Households, 1976

Household No.	Number of Sockeye Salmon Caught on:								
	July					August			
	26	28	29	30	32	1	5	8	9
1	10								
2	4								
3		41							
4		37							
5			73	79	0	15	5	36	
6			74	55					51
7			10						
8				36	2	8		11	
9				60					
10			50	83	27				
11							5		

The following field notes indicate in detail the round of fishing, and other, activities, of one extended family group at Babine Lake, in July, 1977.

At this time of year (July), the salmon are expected daily, and in anticipation, nets are set in the evening and withdrawn early in the morning. There are three separate households fishing, all members of an extended family. Each household sets its own nets, although they are set from the same boat, as there only is one in camp. The nets are the responsibility of the senior woman in each household. The nets are set down the lake from the mouth of the river that the salmon ascend to spawn. In the memory of the oldest members of the extended family (people in their 60s), a fishing camp with several smokehouses once stood on the shore near the river's mouth, but nothing remains. The first nets were set July 20, but only two of the three households had nets in at the start. (See Table 12)

The production for the night of July 23 indicates the variety of species one obtains. MJ pulled up 10 kokanee, 3 sockeye, 14 suckers, and 1 ling cod. SJ got 1 kokanee and 3 sockeye.

The third household was going to put its net into the lake when the salmon started running in more abundance, as the labour involved for so few fish right now was not worth it.

The suckers are waste fish; sockeye are most wanted, although kokanee are also used. Ling cod is too oily to smoke, so is fried fresh.





After bringing in the fish in the morning, the females (women and girls) clean them at the lake shore, and later bring them up to the smokehouse, where they are hung on racks to dry outside before being smoked. After the fish are hung on the outdoor racks, the nets are checked and made ready for fishing that evening.

The settlement is used for activities other than fishing. After the nets are set, a check of the adjacent marshland is made for moose (which involves a wait of several hours, slowly drifting with the current). Hay for the horses and cattle is cut from several nearby fields.



Table 10 Salmon Catches by Three Households, Babine Lake,  
July - August, 1977

	Date	Salmon Catches			Total
		Household A	Household B	Household C	
July	20	3	-	-	3
	21	-	-	-	-
	22	1	-	-	1
	23	-	1	-	1
	24	3	3	-	6
	25	13	6	-	19
	26	13	11	-	24
	27	15	8	-	23
	28	17	5	-	22
	29	10	7	-	17
	30	-	-	-	-
	31	-	5	7	12
	Aug	1	-	12	11
2		-	19	7	26
3		-	13	8	21
4		-	11	13	24
5		-	-	-	-
6		-	11	-	11
7		-	22	-	22
8		-	10	-	10
9		-	13	-	13
10		-	3	-	3
11		-	-	-	-
12		-	-	-	-
13		-	-	-	-
14		-	-	-	-
15		-	26	-	26
16		-	21	-	21
17		-	27	-	27
18		-	53	-	53
19		-	25	-	25
20		-	4	-	4
21		-	7	-	7
22		-	18	-	18
23		-	14	-	14
24		-	20	-	20
25		-	24	-	24
26		-	11	-	11
Total		75	410	46	531
(Note: Data from field notes, and observations by Sandra Joseph, Portage)					



## Appendix 2 Carrier Trapline Transfers

The following examples indicate the transfers of traplines in the study area. For locations of trapping territories discussed, see Figure 11.

### Trapping Area 5

The total area of (5) was considered the territory of nisidin prior to registration, and through lineal transfers, sons and grandsons now have three registered traplines in the original zone. The transfers, diagrammed below, went to two sons who registered in 1925 and 1928 (AD and JD). Also in 1928, sons of AD and JD registered their own lines, and another son of AD registered a line in 1935. By 1935, there were five registered lines in nisidin's area, two by sons and three by grandsons. CJ obtained his father's line in 1945, and later formed a company with a son and two brothers, both of whom resided in another village, having taken up uxorilocal residence. (One, JMJ had obtained a line from his wife's father, but transferred that to a son and returned to register a line in the territory of his F). CJ's son obtained a line elsewhere in 1959, and one brother died in 1970, by which time JMJ had added three of his sons and CJ had added four of his. JMJ had seven sons, but three had already obtained lines in the village where their father resided, and another one obtained a line from a brother in 1973 (this is covered in more detail in the section on Portage). By 1976, JMJ and his sons were off the

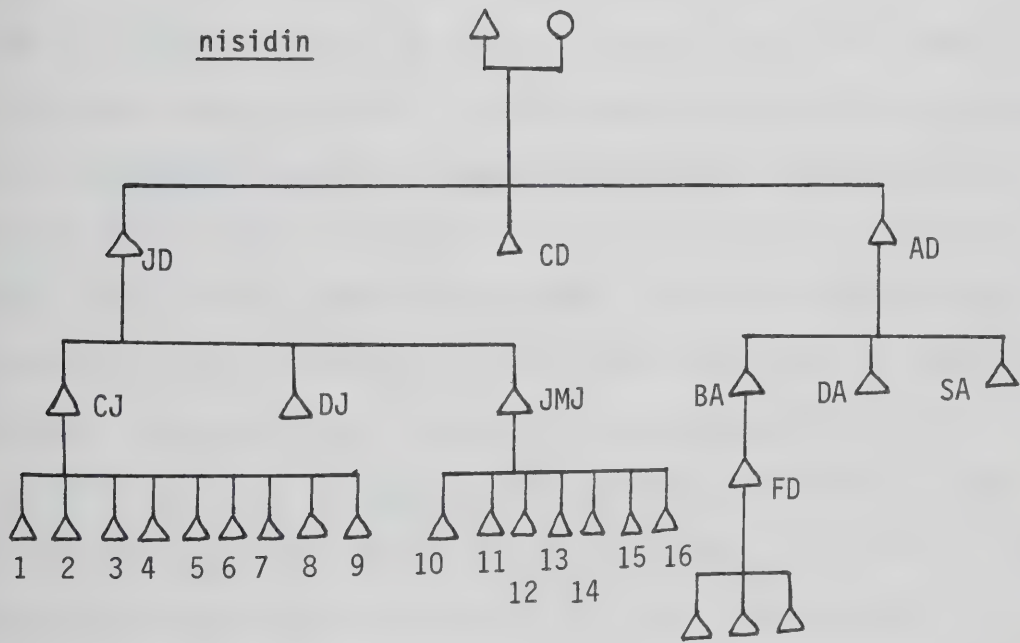




registration, but both CJ and JMJ consider the area of nisidin as one in which all patri-kin have resource-use rights, and it is referred to as their 'homeland'.

The other son of nisidin with a trapping territory transferred the rest of his line to his sons, DA and SA, in 1949 (DA already had a line from 1935). BA transferred his line to a son FD, in 1947, who traps with three of his sons.

Figure 13 Trapline Transfers, Area 5



(1) obtained a line in the Babine Lake area; four of JMJ's sons have traplines in the Portage-Babine Lake area.



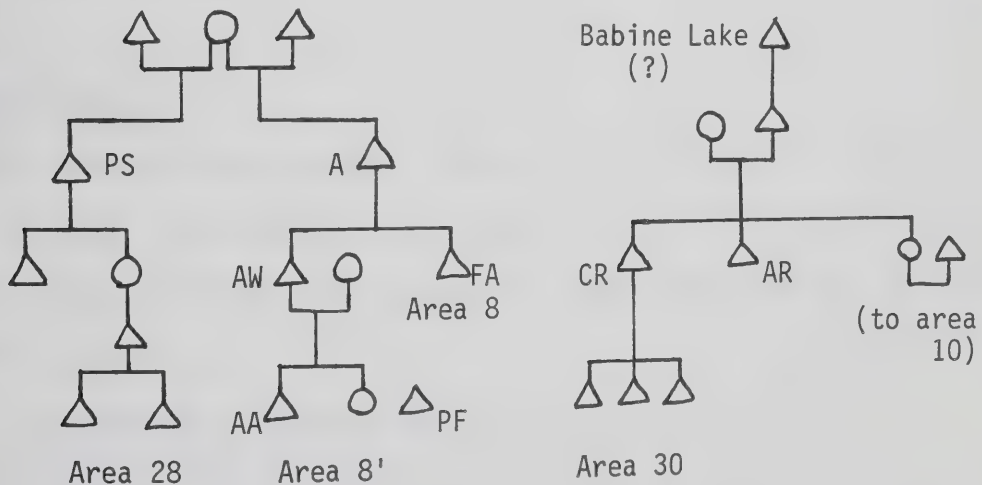
## Trapping Area 8

Registered in 1928 by A, the line passed to a son, FA, in 1938 upon the former's death. Prior to A, the area was reputed to have been owned by A's mother. There is some ambiguity as to the extent of the original trapping area; it seems to have included Areas 8, 7, 28, and 30. A and PS, who registered Area 28, were classificatory brothers, with a common mother and different fathers, and A is said to have given Area 28 to PS (plus loaned Area 7 to ZW), and rented part of what is now Area 30 to CR and his brother AR. Area 8 went from A to his son FA, who transferred part of that to a brother, WA, who had registered a line in Area 17 which was found in conflict and removed (Due to a clerical error, the original application by the father of the present owners of Area 17 was overlooked, and a later application by WA was accepted, but later had to be withdrawn). The rationale for some of the transfers was that "Poor people had traplines loaned to them", but that once removed from direct control of original owners, succession patterns tended to alienate the areas. However, there are alternate interpretations; CR saw the situation as one where he received a line from an estay (father's brother), PS, who had raised him when his own father died. Another explanation given was that the original owner of the whole area was CR's father (who died while CR was young). SP's line in Area 28 went to a daughter's son, whom PS had adopted, until SP's son reached maturity - i.e., the line was being held for the son. The present company registered on the line include both the daughter's son and the son. Area 30 is presently registered by CR's sons (AR died).



When WA died, his widow took over registration in order to retain the line for her son when reached adult status. When the son (AA) died, the line again was taken back by the widow, and eventually was transferred to a son-in-law (This area is marked 8 on the map). The son-in-law now traps there with his son, and the line has shifted from one patronymic group to another through affinal links. The transfers also reflect the pattern of biological reproduction of the WA family groups; AA was the only surviving son (i.e., the only one to reach adulthood), and the only surviving brother of WA, FA, already had a line.

Figure 14 Trapline Transfers, Area 8



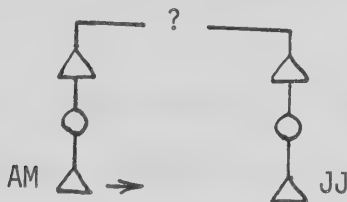
Trapping Area 18

Originally registered in 1929 by AM, who had obtained the line from his mother's father's brother's daughter's son. Through his mother's brother, JJ also shares a potential line in Area 2. AM explained the reason for why he received the line:

It's my mother's fathers' country. He raised me until he died. That's why he gave it to me. Then I sold the trapline to JJ.



Figure 15 Trapline Transfers, Area 18



Trapping territories which might be transferred to a son who was not old enough were sometimes temporarily transferred to another relative, such as the boy's father's brother, who would be 'looking after a trapline' until the boy claimed it. As recognized by the Tl'azt'enne, this can create problems, as the loaned trapline becomes incorporated into the production plans of the temporary holder, as the following example shows.

#### Trapping Area 19

This area was registered in 1929 by W, and held by him until his death in 1936; his widow took over the line from 1937-1947, then to a son, X, from 1947-1959. X's son was the legitimate heir, but declined the line, stating:

I have nothing to do with Dad's trapline since I was not raised by him and besides I don't know how to handle it ... But since its Dad's trapline I will have a little meeting with my dad's sisters and brother and we'll see who will take over the trapline after the meeting ...  
(DIA, Trapline File, 1958)

The line then went to Y, to whom X was a mother's brother. Y died in 1964 and, as his sons were too young to take over the line, a brother, Z, received the registration (in 1970). However, Y's sons are now adults, and the line is considered (in Tl'azt'enne terms) theirs, although their father's brother is registered on the line, and another father's brother also traps in the area. (According to one





observer, X made a will stipulating that the line was to go to his sister's son.)

Two of X's brothers also registered parts of the area in 1925; however, these brothers left no sons who took up the lines, and the official (i.e., Fish and Wildlife Branch) record lists only the transfers from X.



### Appendix 3 Production Figures from a Selected Household

The following table indicates the number of pelts from one Tl'azt'enne trapper which were actually traded in to fur buyers in Fort St. James. Absent from these figures are furs which were traded internally (that is, between Tl'azt'enne). For example, the 1976 fur production of this individual was sold to his brother, who handles furs and runs a small store. Both the other resource-use activities and the internal trade in furs make any commercial analysis of trapping difficult, if not possible.

Table 11 Fur Production Figures from a Selected Tl'azt'enne Trapper, 1970 - 1974

Species	Year			
	1970-71	1971-72	1972-73	1973-74
Beaver	18	17	10	7
Ermine	15	23	10	0
Fisher	5	0	1	0
Cross fox	1	0	0	1
Lynx	0	2	3	1
Marten	6	11	15	4
Mink	4	13	16	7
Muskrat	115	26	8	5
Otter	1	1	0	1
Squirrel	331	219	7	14
Wolf	0	2	0	0
Wolverine	0	0	1	0



### Domestic Production

Each family has access to different resources and supplies of labour, but through direct production and exchange all households have access to bush resources. The following table indicates the amount of resources obtained by one extended family domestic production unit in 1976. The unit consists of a married couple, both in their fifties, a married son in his twenties, and a juvenile male. While everyone set traps, the bulk of the fur production came from the two adult males.

Table 12 Household Production from a Selected  
Tl'azt'enne Family, 1976  
(Portage Village)

<u>Fish</u>	15 char 200 whitefish 0 salmon (but some received from kin in another village)
<u>Fauna</u>	4 moose (killed in the fall, 1976) 4 black bear (mostly obtained for meat for old people)
<u>Fur</u>	27 weasel 206 squirrel 17 marten 32 muskrat 3 mink 1 fisher 1 coyote 18 beaver 1 otter

It is clear from the above table that bush resources constitute an important part of household production. Further, resources not obtained directly through production may be obtained from relatives in other villages.





#### Appendix 4 Postscript on Julian Steward and the Carrier Indians

Julian Steward's use of Carrier ethnographic material in a series of short articles (Steward 1941a, 1941b, 1941c, 1960) contrasts with his exhaustive treatment of the Shoshone. The Shoshone (Steward 1938) were given as a prime example of the utility of the then new concept of cultural ecology. While the limitations of cultural ecology in general have been discussed in detail (Bennett 1976, Orlove 1980), Steward's Carrier articles have had little impact. The Carrier articles were more than just ethnographic vignettes. They appear to have been written as a hedge against cultural ecology being seen as deterministic or Marxist. Steward (1938:260) seems to have anticipated a misreading of cultural ecology in the final pages of his Shoshone study:

Attention to the role of ecology, however, is neither environmental determinism nor economic determinism. Extreme environmental determinism has had ample refutation. Economic determinism, though resting to an undetermined extent upon substantial truth, is, especially in such extreme interpretations as the Marxian, primarily a philosophy, not a scientifically demonstrable fact.

The acculturation model used to describe Carrier culture change provided a means to argue against economic determinism (Marxism), and stress the importance of choice, or ideology. Thus, Steward could argue that the Carriers had voluntarily embraced capitalism.

But perhaps even beyond that, Steward actually described the Carriers as they appeared to be in 1940. He saw them at a point in time when the bush economy was at its lowest point, and many Carriers



were working in the logging industry. Sockeye salmon, the staple food source, had been decimated in 1913 by slides in the Fraser River, and fish ladders had yet to be built to facilitate a partial return. Trapping provided little remuneration, and the establishment of a mercury mine nearby had drawn Indian labourers from the district (see above, my discussion of the Pinchi Lake mercury mine). Steward saw the Carriers at a particular point in their history, and took the situation to be an end point for what he considered to be traditional Carrier culture. The present work underscores the need to continue looking at a process, which never really has a conclusion.

It is difficult to ascertain the pressures on anthropology in the late 1930s. Given the complications which could have arisen from a theory that was seen as Marxist (cf. Harris' (1968:637-639) analysis), Steward appears to have been trying to establish a materialistic framework outside of any identification with Marxism. Steward clearly used the Carrier articles to de-materialize his anthropology, and provide a non-materialistic (read Marxist) model of culture change. That he accepted without question that Native people became dependent on commodities does not put him outside widely held notions of the future of indigenous people in 1940. Steward did argue for what I interpret as an ecologically and historically informed anthropology. His notion of diffusion and acculturation as history reflects the theories of the time.











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